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HISTORY OF THE GREAT WAR

BASED ON OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS.

THE CAMPAIGN IN MESOPOTAMIA

1914-1918.

Compiled, at the request of the Government of India,
under the direction of the Historical Section
of the Committee of Imperial Defence,

BY

BRIG.-GEN. F. J. MOBERLY, C.B., C.S.I., D.S.O., p.s.c.

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PREFACE.

THIS volume deals only with the operations up to the 30th April, 1917, as, to obviate the issue of a bulky and unwieldy book, it has been decided to complete this history in four volumes instead of three, as was originally intended.

Atrocious weather, inadequate preparations, insufficient means and other mistakes or omissions, including the lack of a definite policy to govern our operations from the outset, had all contributed to the disasters which followed our failure to reach Baghdad in 1915. But in 1916 we set ourselves to rectify matters. Owing to the success achieved in this respect, for which he himself was largely responsible, General Maude had fewer administrative anxieties than his predecessors. His operations were also less hampered by floods than theirs had been, as there was much less rain in the winter and early spring 1916–17 than in the previous year. He was thus better able to utilise his superiority in arms, equipment and numbers to take advantage of the strategical and tactical mistakes of his opponents; though the heroic stand on the Tigris made by the officers and men of the Turkish XVIII Corps rendered this anything but an easy task. For it required all the skill of our commanders and the gallantry of our officers and men to obtain a success, which would undoubtedly have been more decisive and far-reaching in its effect had it not been for the unfortunate results of the Russian revolution.

For the sake of the military student the operations in Chapter XXX have been described in detail, as this phase of the campaign in Mesopotamia is the only instance of a period of continuous, close trench fighting.

In the compilation of this volume, the author has again received much assistance from various officers who took part in the operations, and from others, including Lady Maude, who have been good enough to lend him private papers, check his drafts or help him in different ways. To these, to many in the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence, and especially to Colonel F. E. G. Talbot, he desires to take this opportunity of expressing his grateful acknowledgments. For four of the photographs reproduced he is indebted to the official photographer with the force, to T. A. Chalmers, Esq., C.S.I., and to John M. Dunn, Press Photographer, Brechin, and for the remainder to the Headquarters of the Royal Air Force in Mesopotamia, who have been at great pains to assist him.

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CHAPTER XXVII.

MAY TO SEPTEMBER, 1916

(MAP 21.)

AFTER the surrender of Kut, the British and Turkish forces on the Tigris settled into a state of comparative inactivity, which endured till near the end of 1916. Both sides were exhausted by their efforts, hardships and losses; and both had suffered from long and imperfectly organised lines of communication, from the atrocious weather and from the local physical conditions.

The British were no longer under the necessity of persisting in hazardous attacks which neither their condition nor their circumstances now justified; while the Turks, having achieved their immediate object, but being inferior in numerical strength, were in no condition to press their advantage by assuming the offensive. Moreover, the Russian threat to Baghdad, then materialising, would probably require the diversion of most, if not all, available Turkish reinforcements.

When authorising General Lake to open negotiations for the surrender of Kut, the Secretary of State for War had informed him on the 25th April of the policy to be followed when Kut had been given up. The general British attitude was to be defensive. But, to minimise the effect of the surrender and to assist the Russians by keeping the Turks on the Tigris fully occupied, General Lake was not to withdraw his force further than might be necessary for tactical reasons. It was considered that for this rôle his force was sufficiently strong and it was not proposed to reinforce it, although all that was possible would be done to maintain it at its authorised establishment.

This policy of holding as forward a line as possible was one in which the authorities in Mesopotamia, India and London all concurred. A withdrawal down the Tigris might not only lead to extensive risings of tribes on and near our line of communications, but would also probably react unfavourably on the situation in Persia and Afghanistan. Moreover, by retaining positions well up the river, the Tigris Corps would be well placed to threaten the communications of any Turkish force moving down the Hai and at the same time assist the Russian advance towards Baghdad. This advance was to start from Karind on the 28th April, being assisted by a simultaneous forward movement against Ruwandiz by the left of the Russian Caucasus army from the vicinity of Urmia.

The effective strength of the Tigris Corps (6th Cavalry Brigade, 3rd, 7th and 13th Divisions, and 35th, 36th and 37th Infantry Brigades) amounted to about 2,000 sabres, 23,450 rifles and 143 guns. The 41st Infantry Brigade, which had been reconstituted of four weak battalions from the trenches, was being sent back from Shaikh Saad to form a reserve at Basra in place of the 42nd Brigade (only three battalions strong) under orders to reinforce Nasiriya, in which area trouble seemed possible.

In a telegram of the 25th April, which crossed that from Lord Kitchener above mentioned, General Lake said that until the Tigris Corps was made up to full establishment, it would not be feasible to withdraw any of its divisions out of the line for the rest and reorganisation they all needed, as the fall of Kut would set free the Turkish investing force, as well as any reinforcements, for operations down the Hai or elsewhere. In his opinion, in order to make his position secure, he should have at Basra a reserve of a division, at any rate till his other divisions had been made up to establishment, to enable him to support if necessary either the Karun or the Euphrates line; and he recommended strongly that, with a view to the eventual resumption of the offensive at the expiration of the flood season, two brigades of Colonial Mounted Rifles should be sent him in addition to a reserve division.

On the 28th, with reference to the orders from the Secretary of State for War, General Lake telegraphed that his intention was that General Gorringe, whose ultimate object would be the recapture of Kut as soon as he was in a position to resume the offensive, should not relax his hold on the enemy forces and should take every opportunity of pushing in and capturing the enemy's works in advance of his Sinn position on both banks of the river. General Lake hoped that in the next two months General Gorringe's divisions would be made up to full establishment and reorganised; and that their land transport would be sufficiently augmented to give them adequate freedom of manœuvre by the time the floods had subsided, i.e., at the beginning of July. He again emphasised his former opinion that, though General Gorringe's position would be fairly secure, the whole force would still suffer from the absence of a central reserve which could relieve a reduced or battered division from the trenches or reinforce the Euphrates or Karun lines. The only reinforcements he was able to send to Nasiriya were the three battalions of the 42nd Brigade, a battalion of the 34th Brigade from Qurna, and the 7th Mountain Artillery

Brigade from Basra, thus making up the total force on the Euphrates to three squadrons of cavalry, nine and a half battalions of infantry, three mountain and one Territorial field batteries, a section of sappers and four post guns. Though this would probably suffice for strictly defensive action against any force that, in the absence of reinforcements, the enemy was likely to bring down the Hai, it left no margin for offensive action. General Lake's only reserve at Basra would be the 41st Infantry Brigade, one field artillery brigade, the 13th Divisional Squadron—this only temporarily—and two squadrons of Indian cavalry. The two brigades of Colonial Mounted Rifles he asked for would be a valuable addition to this reserve, and they would be able to reinforce General Gorringe when he resumed the offensive.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff, not being sure from this reply that General Lake understood the intentions of H.M. Government, sent a telegram on the 30th April to the Commander-in-Chief in India explaining their policy fully and asking Sir Beauchamp Duff, unless he saw any reason to disagree, to instruct General Lake accordingly. As the policy laid down was adhered to without material change for many months it is quoted here in full :—

> "At present our policy in Mesopotamia is defensive and we do not attach any importance to the possession of Kut or to the occupation of Baghdad. It is, of course, impracticable to prescribe policy for a long time ahead. Lake would probably be directed to fall back to Amara, or even to Qurna, if no other considerations were involved ; but it is important to minimise and counteract the effect of the fall of Kut, and, in order to assist the Russians, to keep occupied the Turks now opposed to the Tigris Corps. For these reasons Lake should for the present maintain as forward a position as can be made secure tactically and be ready to take advantage of any weakening of the Turks on his front, so long as this can be effected without incurring heavy loss, whether caused by the enemy or by unhealthy conditions.
>
> "It is undesirable and impossible to reinforce Lake, owing to the conditions in other theatres of war, but he will be kept adequately supplied with drafts and munitions. According to our information his forces are superior to those of the enemy, and he should, therefore, have no difficulty in carrying out the above policy until the Turks are strongly reinforced. In that event he should be given

full discretion to fall back; at any rate he must be clearly shown that the security of his force is of primary importance, and that neither now nor at any time is he required to maintain a more forward position than he thinks he can hold with reasonable safety. Lake should inform you if he considers he cannot carry out his assigned rôle with the forces at his disposal."

Sir Beauchamp Duff suggested that in passing on these instructions to General Lake he should also point out that by maintaining as far forward a position as possible there would be not only less need for a central reserve owing to the way in which we should threaten a Turkish move down the Hai, but we should have greater influence over Pusht-i-Kuh and protect Arabistan and the oilfields better. Moreover, the farther up the Tigris the less unhealthy was the climate. To this the Chief of the Imperial General Staff had no objection, and on the 3rd May the telegraphic correspondence was repeated to General Lake in full for his direction and guidance. In acknowledging these instructions on the 6th, General Lake said that, unless the enemy were strongly reinforced, he considered that General Gorringe should have no difficulty in maintaining approximately his present position.

In passing on his instructions two days later to General Gorringe, General Lake pointed out that the Hai could be more adequately controlled, and with fewer troops, from a position nearer its junction with the Tigris, and that General Gorringe should take any opportunity of making the necessary advance provided he could do so without incurring heavy loss.

The Tigris Corps still maintained close contact with the Turks at Sannaiyat and Bait Isa, the British line on the right bank of the Tigris extending southwards for about four miles with its left flank refused. The opposing Turkish force was believed to consist of a cavalry brigade, the 35th, 45th, 51st, 52nd and part of the 2nd Divisions, its strength being estimated at 1,700 sabres, 21,600 rifles and 96 guns.* Between Kut and Baghdad there were thought to be some 4,600 Turkish troops, with another 1,700 scattered in many detachments on the Euphrates line below Baghdad; and on the Persian frontier the Turkish force was estimated at from 3,000 to 4,000.

The British line of communication on the Tigris between Shaikh Saad and Basra was held by a troop of cavalry, 3 battalions of infantry and 7 guns; on the Euphrates line

* The Turkish General Staff place their numbers considerably lower; see subsequent narrative.

and at Nasiriya, including troops *en route*, were 3¼ squadrons of cavalry, 26 guns, 1⅓ sapper companies and 9½ infantry battalions; at Basra or under orders to proceed there were 3 squadrons of cavalry, 18 guns, 1 sapper company and 5 infantry battalions; in Arabistan there were 3 squadrons of cavalry and half a battalion of infantry; and at Bushire 2 squadrons of cavalry, 7 guns and 2½ battalions of infantry.

The Russian force in Persia under General Baratoff totalled some 10,000 sabres, 10,000 rifles and 38 guns, but they were distributed over a very wide area, including places as far apart as Tehran, Isfahan and Karind. In the vicinity of Karind, General Baratoff was believed to have rather less than half his total strength; he was faced with considerable supply and transport difficulties; and the first part of his advance towards Baghdad would lie over difficult and high-lying country, much of it still under snow.

Owing to Russian and British action the situation in Persia had improved, though in the south and south-east the country was still to some extent under German domination. Brigadier-General Sir Percy Sykes, with a few British and Indian officers and non-commissioned officers and a small cavalry escort, had reached Bandar Abbas in March, where he had met with a cordial reception from the Persian Governor-General of the Gulf Ports and had begun recruiting a Persian force to replace the rebellious gendarmerie. In April he had been joined by two mountain guns, a squadron of cavalry and half a battalion of Indian infantry detached from the British garrison at Bushire, and by the end of the month he was making arrangements to move on Kerman. By this time the tide in South Persia had begun to turn definitely against the Germans and Austrians. Several factors had contributed to this state of affairs: General Sykes' activities; the growing unpopularity of the Germans and Austrians owing to their behaviour; the success of the acting Persian Governor-General of Fars, assisted by British arms and money, in defeating the rebellious gendarmerie and re-establishing much of his authority; the movement of a British mission with a small military escort through Makran, where German agents had been creating disturbances; and the Russo-British cordon in East Persia, which had not only closed the way to Afghanistan, but was beginning active retaliation against the marauding tribes in Persian Baluchistan and elsewhere who had been stirred up by German agents. As a result, the Bakhtiari Governor-General of Kerman found himself obliged by local opinion to drive the Germans and their supporters out of Kerman.

In Afghanistan the Turco-German mission was still at Kabul, but the Amir, though temporising with Turkey to keep his own extremists quiet, was still maintaining his neutral attitude.* In India, the situation on the North-West Frontier and internally was fairly satisfactory, though it was still too soon to determine the effect of the surrender of Kut.

From information obtained from Turkish sources it appears that at the end of April 1916 their Sixth Army, with a total combatant strength of about 35,000 of all ranks, was distributed as follows. The greater part of the 2nd and 35th Divisions of the XIIIth Army Corps, with a cavalry brigade, was on the Tigris below Kut; the 45th Division of the XVIII Army Corps was at Kut, with its two other divisions (51st and 52nd) on the Tigris to the eastward, i.e., also below Kut;† the 6th Division, which had recently arrived, was partly at Baghdad and partly down the Tigris; and the "Baghdad Group" consisting of various units of the XIII Army Corps had, owing to the Russian advance, been withdrawn from Persia to near Khaniqin.

Halil Pasha had been appointed to succeed Field-Marshal von der Goltz in the command of the Sixth Army with responsibility for the front from Nasiriya to the Mosul frontier; and as soon as he had arranged for the surrender of Kut he himself moved back to Baghdad, where he established his headquarters.

It appears that while Halil himself felt confident that the British would be unable to force their way through his strong defences on the Tigris, the Russian threat to Baghdad caused him great anxiety. In consequence, he decided to withdraw the cavalry brigade and the 2nd Division from the Tigris and send them with the 6th Division to Khaniqin to oppose Baratoff. These movements commenced in the second week of May and about the same time the Turkish 35th Division, much reduced in strength, was disbanded. In this way only the three divisions of the XVIII Army Corps remained to oppose General Gorringe.

* General von Gleich in "Vom Balkan nach Baghdad" says that at this time in Baghdad they could get no news from Niedermayer and Hentig, who were detained in Kabul. He also says that the Amir of Afghanistan had let the Turks know that, although the result of the world-war was not yet to be perceived, he was making his preparations, and at a favourable opportunity would fulfil his duty as a Musalman.

† Muhammad Amin in "Baghdad and the Story of its Last Fall," says that the combatant strength of the XVIII Army Corps was reduced to 10,720.

At the beginning of May, the British force on the Tigris was urgently in need, not only of rest, drafts and reorganisation, but also of an assured and constant supply of rations, ammunition and medical and other stores; while, to enable it to withstand the effects of the coming hot weather and to minimise casualties from disease, it was necessary that all ranks should be made as comfortable as was possible Drafts were on their way and at first it seemed as if circumstances would allow of the required rest and reorganisation. But as time passed it became increasingly apparent that the shortage of land and river transport, the congestion at Basra of ocean shipping and the lack of labour and accommodation created such a difficult situation that it was impossible to assure to the troops at the front a supply of what was required on anything like an adequate scale. Moreover, from April to September, the force experienced a very great amount of disease and sickness, causing extraordinarily large casualties; and this naturally complicated matters considerably. Nor is this surprising. Naturally depressed at their failure to relieve Kut, weakened by very heavy losses and debilitated by their efforts and the hardships they had undergone, officers and men were ill-prepared to withstand the reaction that invariably sets in under such conditions. Especially when, as was the case on the Tigris, they were to experience for many weeks unusually intense heat, to alleviate which there were few amenities and a diet usually unsuitable and often insufficient. Moreover, the medical personnel were still too few, their technical equipment too scanty and their evacuation arrangements too inadequate to allow of proper medical attention and treatment; while the combatant supervising ranks had been largely depleted of men experienced enough to look properly after the very young rank and file who were not yet acclimatised to face a tropical climate under anything but perfect conditions.

Consequently, the description of the British campaign for the seven or eight months following the surrender of Kut is mainly a narrative of the efforts to put matters on a proper footing; and while these are important to the extent that their ultimate success permitted final victory, considerations of space forbid all but a brief reference to them here.

On the 12th May, a new division, the 14th, was formed of the 35th, 36th and 37th Infantry Brigades and of other units from the Tigris Corps; and Major-General R. G. Egerton of the 7th Brigade proceeded to Shaikh Saad to command it. Shaikh Saad now became the advanced base, the boat bridge

being moved there from Wadi, where only a small fortified post remained. Additional precautions had also to be taken to control the Arab tribes along the weakly held Tigris line of communication: and for this, units were withdrawn from the front and formed into small mobile columns based on Kumait, Ali Gharbi and Amara.

On the 14th May, General Gorringe reported that the mastery of the air had passed into the hands of the enemy. His Fokker aeroplanes were of greater fighting efficiency than the British machines; and the British air personnel and machines were also feeling the strain of the work at high pressure which had preceded the surrender of Kut and which had come after months of continuous work without a rest. As a result, there were many casualties among the pilots from sickness and a large proportion of the aeroplanes were unfit to fly, while for various reasons the seaplanes were no longer of any use. A kite balloon section was under orders for Mesopotamia from Egypt, but General Lake was obliged to press the War Office for faster and more efficient aeroplanes, as well as for proper anti-aircraft guns to replace the two naval 12-pounders on improvised mountings—his only anti-aircraft guns—which had proved of little use.

On the 7th May, General Baratoff's force occupied Qasr-i-Shirin on its advance to Khaniqin and three days later General Lake was asked to detach a force from the Tigris to prevent the Turks from moving along the Badra-Kermanshah road and attacking the Russian line of communication. General Lake did not share the Russian apprehensions as to the probability of such a move, and it was in any case impossible for him to comply with their request. But he promised to watch carefully for, and keep General Baratoff informed of, any signs of a Turkish movement along this difficult mountainous track. At this time the Russians estimated that the Turkish force at Khaniqin consisted of 2,000 cavalry and six to eight battalions of infantry and that reinforcements of another ten or twelve battalions were on their way there from Baghdad. A few days later General Lake sent General Baratoff definite information that about the 9th May the Turkish cavalry brigade, 700 strong with two guns, and ten battalions of the 2nd Division with twelve guns had moved from the Kut area via Jassan towards the Persian frontier.

In spite of this Turkish withdrawal, General Gorringe estimated that, owing to the arrival of drafts, the Turkish force opposite him was still some 20,000 strong and that about two-thirds of this number were on the right bank of the river.

According to German and Turkish accounts, however, the Turkish strength then remaining on the Tigris below Kut only amounted to 11,000 or 12,000.

On the 16th May, General Lake heard that the Russians had occupied Ruwandiz, but that General Baratoff, reporting that the Turkish position at Khaniqin was very strong, had been instructed not to attack for the present.

British aeroplanes reconnoitring on the morning of the 19th May reported a considerable Turkish withdrawal on the right bank of the Tigris. A bridge of boats which the Turks had recently constructed across the Tigris below Kut at Abdul Hassan was standing and Sinn Abtar redoubt was still held, but the Bait Isa and Chahela positions were no longer occupied, and all the Turkish camps in those and the Sinn Banks vicinities on the right bank had gone. On the left bank the Sannaiyat position was still held in strength.

At this time the greater part of the British 7th Division was on the left bank between Sannaiyat and Fallahiya, the front line trenches being held by an infantry brigade supported by eighteen guns. On the right bank the front line was held by an infantry brigade of the 7th Division, two brigades of the 13th Division and two brigades of the 3rd Division, in that order from the right, the left brigade facing due south. Ten guns of the 7th Division were on the right bank facing north across the river, while seventy-nine guns supported the right bank line. The remainder of the 3rd and 13th Divisions and the 36th Brigade of the 14th Division were in reserve. The 35th Brigade, 33rd Cavalry and six guns were at Twin Canals, small infantry detachments at Wadi and Ora, and the 6th Cavalry Brigade headquarters and 37th Infantry Brigade of the 14th Division with some engineers and twenty-three guns were at Shaikh Saad.

When the first reconnaissance reports came in to Corps headquarters, General Gorringe was away on a visit to Shaikh Saad. In his absence, about 8.30 a.m., General Keary, the senior officer at the front, ordered the 33rd Cavalry out to reconnoitre and also gave instructions for parties of infantry to push forward into the Bait Isa and Chahela positions. Some two hours later these orders were countermanded by General Gorringe. Owing to the great heat, the lack of drinking water and the great danger of infection with cholera from the evacuated Turkish trenches,* General Gorringe had decided to attempt

* There had been 800 cases of cholera in the Tigris Corps during April and May, and cases kept recurring.

no further movement till night, when the Cavalry Brigade from Shaikh Saad would move forward and, supported by the 3rd Division and 36th Infantry Brigade, try to seize the Abdul Hassan bridge at dawn next day, the whole force moving well to the south of the cholera-infected trenches at Bait Isa and Chahela. Owing to his limited amount of land transport, General Gorringe was unable to detail a larger force for the operation.

The Cavalry Brigade was late owing to delay in collecting extra transport; and soon after dawn next morning, while still in rear of the British front line, they learnt that the Turks had removed their bridge from Abdul Hassan. Continuing to advance and meeting with little or no opposition, they halted at about 8.30 a.m. about a mile to the north-west of Imam al Mansur, whence they ascertained by means of patrols that Maqasis and Abdul Hassan were clear of the enemy, but that Turkish cavalry interposed between them and the Hai.

In the meantime General Keary's force of the 3rd Division and 36th Brigade had advanced without encountering opposition and occupied the Dujaila redoubt just before 10 a.m. Leaving the 9th Infantry Brigade there, General Keary moved on with the remainder to Imam al Mansur, which he reached about 1 p.m.

The whole force suffered greatly from the intense heat. By the time the Dujaila redoubt was reached men were falling out in large numbers, and when the force arrived at Imam al Mansur the number of stragglers lying all along the line of advance had reached several hundreds, of whom many were dying. The water in the men's bottles had given out; that carried in the motor lorries was hardly sufficient to go round; and no more could be obtained nearer than Maqasis or the Hai. At 1.30 p.m. General Keary reported that his men were too exhausted for further movement that day. He had not yet heard whether the enemy were present at the mouth of the Hai or whether it would be possible to water his animals and refill his motor lorries at Maqasis that evening. There was no water at Dujaila, and, suggesting that he should take up a line from the Kut bend to Atab on the Hai, he asked for orders.

About 2.30 p.m. the Cavalry Brigade moved to Maqasis and began watering there in the river, but were obliged some two hours later, by hostile shelling from Maduq, to desist and withdraw to Imam al Mansur.

About 4.30 p.m. General Gorringe sent General Keary orders to occupy the line Maqasis-Dujaila, as the land transport was

insufficient for the maintenance of the force on the line General Keary had suggested. An aeroplane reconnaissance to examine the Hai from Atab to Kut and Maduq would be sent out about 6 p.m. and would drop a copy of its report at General Keary's headquarters. If this showed that the Turkish bridge across the Hai about five hundred yards from Kut was still intact, the Cavalry Brigade, which was at once to come under General Keary's orders, was to secure it if possible.

The whole force, except for the 9th Brigade at Dujaila, spent the night 20th/21st May at Imam al Mansur; and at 3.30 a.m. the Cavalry Brigade advanced to secure the Hai bridge, or, if it had been removed, to reconnoitre the line of the Hai to Atab. When about half a mile off the bridge, they encountered Turkish infantry entrenched and supported by artillery; and the cavalry commander, finding the opposition too great, withdrew and reconnoitred towards Atab. General Keary's infantry meanwhile occupied the line Maqasis—Dujaila.

At 11.15 a.m. General Keary reported that cavalry and aeroplane reconnaissance showed that it would take at least a division to seize and occupy the Hai near Kut if the operation were carried out at once before the enemy could strengthen his position. General Keary's own troops were too exhausted to undertake this task, and as he was thus compelled to remain for the time being on the Maqasis—Dujaila line he would arrange for a water supply by the Nasifiya and Maqasis canals.*

As it appeared probable, from the reported collection of steamers and transport in the enemy's rear, that the Turkish withdrawal on the right bank would soon be followed by a corresponding withdrawal on the left bank also, General Lake asked General Gorringe on the 22nd May for his views on the situation. In replying the same day, General Gorringe gave it as his opinion that the Turks were retaining their left bank positions to cover a withdrawal from the Kut area, to prevent our steamers advancing and to hamper our advance generally but especially along the left bank. His instructions to avoid heavy losses prohibited attempts to turn the Turks out of their Sannaiyat and Nukhailat positions, but with a view to their ultimate capture if other means failed he was pushing forward his saps and approaches on the left bank. For the time being, therefore, forward movement was restricted to the right bank, but was at the same time strictly limited by his lack of land

* This took some time and till the arrangements were completed there was a great shortage of water.

transport, the water difficulty, the intense heat and the floods on the far side of the Hai.

The reports from General Lake of this state of affairs led the Chief of the Imperial General Staff to telegraph on the 23rd May to the Commander-in-Chief in India saying that though he was insufficiently acquainted with the situation on the Tigris, where the Turkish dispositions seemed somewhat peculiar,* he did not think he could usefully add to his former instructions that General Lake should be ready to take advantage of any enemy weakness provided he could do so without incurring heavy loss. The Commander-in-Chief answered on the 24th that apparently the Turkish plan was to contain General Gorringe with an inferior force sufficiently long to enable them to concentrate against, and beat, Baratoff. Their flank positions at Sannaiyat and Nukhailat blocked the river passage, forcing us to use land transport for operations on the Hai, and possibly at the same time covered their own retreat towards Jassan. If General Gorringe, whose strength was 1,430 sabres, 27,540 rifles and 143 guns, were to cross sufficient force to the left bank, say near Maqasis, it should oblige the enemy to evacuate Sannaiyat and would afterwards facilitate operations against the Hai. At the most, the Turkish strength opposite General Gorringe was 17,000 rifles and 66 guns. General Gorringe had therefore sufficient force and should be able to execute, without heavy loss, some such plan, which, besides affording the Russians effective co-operation, would improve greatly our own military and political position. Sir Beauchamp Duff suggested that General Lake should be directed to carry out this proposal if he considered it feasible and the best adapted to the situation. The Commander-in-Chief concluded his telegram by saying that the latest reports as to General Gorringe's supplies and ammunition were satisfactory, and that the output of the line of communications was being increased by better organisation and the arrival of river craft.†

In the meantime General Gorringe had reported that, as the latest information showed that the enemy were holding the line of the Hai from Kut to Hamidiya, he was awaiting a more favourable opportunity before attempting to bridge the Hai.

Sir William Robertson replied to Sir Beauchamp Duff that he did not feel in a position to do more than issue general

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* The Chief of the Imperial General Staff did not realise that the Turkish communications along the left bank were either immune or well protected from our artillery fire from the opposite bank.

† This rather optimistic view of supply and maintenance arrangements is not borne out by accounts from other sources of conditions at the front.

instructions and those he had sent on the 30th April seemed adequate and as full as he could make them. It would undoubtedly be advantageous to co-operate efficiently with the Russians and improve our military position on the Tigris, and General Lake should do this if it could be done compatibly with the instructions alluded to; but the man on the spot was the only one able to decide.

On the 27th May, Sir Beauchamp Duff, repeating the whole of this correspondence, asked General Lake for his views. These were sent next day. In face of his instructions from home, General Lake had not felt justified in ordering a more active offensive, although he realised that Baratoff would soon find himself confronted by superior numbers. He was, however, asking General Gorringe what he could do on the lines suggested. But there was not sufficient available material to bridge the Tigris at Maqasis without dismantling one of the bridges at Fallahiya or Shaikh Saad, and General Gorringe had insufficient land transport for an advance along the right bank and across the Hai. On the 29th General Lake telegraphed that General Gorringe reported his inability to cross the Tigris at Maqasis without incurring heavy loss.

On the 20th May a Russian Cossack patrol of 113 officers and men had arrived unexpectedly at Ali Gharbi from General Baratoff's force. Their two hundred mile march through the mountains and—in the last stages—desert was a fine feat. Lightly equipped with only ten pack horses and living for the most part on supplies purchased as they went, they had fortunately met with little opposition; and their only casualties had been a few horses lost from accidents, thirst or exhaustion. During their stay of a fortnight in Mesopotamia, General Lake decorated the officers, by command of His Majesty the King, with the British Military Cross "in recognition of this exploit and of this the first meeting of British and Russian troops, as allies in the field, for one hundred years." Their return to their main body was, after various adventures, carried out in safety. About this time, an officer from General Baratoff's force and one from Force "D" were attached to each other's staffs to ensure closer co-operation.

On the 1st June General Baratoff attacked the Turkish position at Khaniqin. The left of the Russian Caucasus army had occupied Ruwandiz nearly three weeks previously, but there was between Ruwandiz and General Baratoff a large gap of very difficult and mountainous country; and the Turks at Khaniqin had been largely reinforced. It appears that Enver

Pasha had arrived in Baghdad about the first or second week in May and, it is said, sweeping away all objections had insisted on the whole Turkish XIII Corps being sent at once to the Persian frontier, not only to drive back Baratoff, but also to re-occupy Kermanshah, as a means of continuing the Turco-German plans for operations in Persia and beyond. Many German and Turkish officers have offered the opinion that these operations in Persia were an unjustifiable dispersion of effort, which was ultimately responsible for the loss of Baghdad; and the officers of the one country frequently blame those of the other for their conception and execution. The truth appears to be, however, that both countries were almost equally responsible. Whether justifiable or not, the Turco-German activities in Persia caused us embarrassment and at times anxiety for the defence of India and were, moreover, one of the reasons for our advance on Baghdad. The immediate result was that General Baratoff's attack was repulsed and he was obliged to retire to Karind, where for a time he halted.

Proposals from political sources, during May and at the beginning of June, that operations should be undertaken from Bushire to effect the release of British consular officials and others imprisoned at Ahram as a result of Austro-German activities, were negatived on military grounds. The intense heat and the difficult country were the main reasons against the project; and it was decided to leave the release of the prisoners, who were understood to be in no actual danger, to be effected later on by General Sykes.

At the end of May General Lake estimated the Turkish strength on the Tigris at 16,000 rifles and 64 guns, but it was not easy to judge correctly as there was practically no movement by day owing to the intense heat. Early and reliable information of the movements of reinforcements and other Turkish troops, necessary to divine their intentions, was also very difficult to obtain, although many reports concerning them were received. Among these was one of the recent arrival at Baghdad of a weak Austrian division, which subsequently proved to be untrue but for which, for some time, neither confirmation nor refutation could be obtained; and although it seemed improbable its possibility could not be ignored. It was also reported that the Turks were about to use gas shells* and, although they had never done so, General Lake considered it advisable to ask for a reserve of such shells which he would not utilise unless the Turks began to do so.

* Gas cylinders were subsequently found in the Turkish arsenal at Baghdad.

By feigning an attack on Sannaiyat on the 6th June, General Gorringe ascertained that the Turks were still holding that position in strength; and it was reported three days later that on the right bank they were entrenching a line across the loop of the Tigris immediately north-east of Kut. By this time the British had occupied and entrenched an advanced position at Imam al Mansur and had posted 60-pounder guns there to command the Hai bridge. On the 11th June, three British ammunition barges near the Fallahiya bridge were blown up and sunk by Turkish gunfire directed by their aeroplanes; and as the bridge itself appeared to be in danger it was removed next day and reconstructed near Arab Village.

Throughout May, Arab marauders were continuously active in the vicinity of our camps at night, as well as in looting and attacking small or isolated parties whenever opportunity offered; and from the end of May the greater part of the Cavalry Brigade had to be employed in protective duties against them. But their depredations continued, causing us a good many casualties and losses and infinite trouble. The seventeen-mile-long line of communication from Shaikh Saad to Sinn was the area mostly affected; and it was not till September 1916, when the whole of this line was protected by wire entanglements and small posts, that the Arab depredations were really suppressed. On the 8th June General Lake gladly accepted an offer from the Chief of the Imperial General Staff to send him from France an additional Indian cavalry brigade.

At this time General Lake was carrying out a full discussion with General Gorringe regarding the possibility of a limited offensive on the Tigris; and on the 13th June he reported the results. The Tigris Corps would not be an effective fighting force for some time to come. It had suffered over 22,000 casualties in action and from disease during April and May; and it had been impossible to give formations the period of rest required for re-organisation and recuperation. Until the recently commenced light railway from Shaikh Saad reached Sinn, General Gorringe would have insufficient transport for an advance beyond the Hai; and even if his troops were fit and the transport adequate, any idea of an extended offensive was precluded by the very low state of the supplies' reserve at Shaikh Saad. So many river steamers were out of action that it was only possible to deliver at the front the quite inadequate daily average of 330 tons on all accounts; but it was anticipated that the situation would improve soon when local supplies became available after the harvest at and above Amara.

General Lake intended, therefore, unless circumstances demanded imperatively an active offensive, that, for the next few weeks and during the intense heat, General Gorringe should consolidate his position near the Tigris–Hai junction, denying both these routes to the enemy, gradually extend town the Hai to enable him to obtain as great a quantity of local supplies as possible from the Hai districts, contain as large an enemy force as possible by an active defensive, and be prepared to take advantage of any opportunity that offered.

Two days later Sir William Robertson agreed to the above, saying that as Baratoff had withdrawn to Karind and so long as there was no material change in the situation, there was no reason for offensive operations, unless the enemy were to offer us a good prospect of gaining some material advantage at a small cost.

The water in the Tigris began to fall at the end of May and declined rapidly during June. The flooded areas soon dried up and by the third week in June the Umm al Baram was quite dry. The crops there, harvested by the troops, yielded a considerable quantity of barley and this was augmented by large amounts obtained from Arabs in the vicinity.

Although neither of the combatants attempted to assume the offensive, close contact was maintained by the British with the Turkish Sannaiyat position, against which they carried out frequent gun and machine gun bombardments; and their advanced saps had reached to about ninety yards from the Turkish front line by the end of June. Turkish aeroplanes and Turkish artillery also carried out frequent bombardments, causing the British a good many casualties. The position was, however, so far stabilised that by the end of June it was found possible to withdraw the whole of the 13th Division to the comparative rest of Shaikh Saad; the 14th Division took over all the front line positions on the right bank of the Tigris, being supported by the 3rd Division a short distance in rear; and the 7th Division still held the left bank and the line of the Tigris to Ora.

During the intense heat of June, sickness and disease levied from the Tigris Corps a very heavy toll. The scorching heat, against which tents were but scant protection, increased in intensity as the days passed without any signs of the usual *Shamal**; there was no escape by day from the dust and the

* The strong north-west wind which normally sets in about the second or third week of June and continues for six weeks, affording great relief from the heat.

heat,* and little relief by night, when it was comparatively cool, from the sandflies and other flying pests ; and, added to these, the tedious monotony of existence in the desert, with little to occupy the mind beyond the daily military routine, contributed greatly to the discomfort of the healthy and the sufferings of the sick.

As already described,† General Lake, soon after his arrival in Mesopotamia, had to abandon the idea of getting a railway up the Tigris in time to assist the Kut relief operations. But early in April he called on his Chief Engineer to report on the construction of a light railway to Amara, and a week later he received a telegram from the Chief of the Imperial General Staff raising the same question. By this time, landing facilities at Maqil had improved and sufficient ground had been raised there above flood level for the storage of railway material ;‡ and General Lake replied recommending the construction of a metre-gauge line to Nasiriya from Basra and of a 2 ft. 6 in. gauge line from Qurna§ to Amara. The former, which would enable him to reinforce and supply the Euphrates line much more quickly than the inadequate river transport and shallow water route permitted, could be rapidly constructed, as the ground was practically level the whole way and no bridges would be required till opposite Nasiriya. The second would be a more difficult proposition, as the line would require protection against flood erosion throughout its length. Although anything lighter than the metre-gauge line would compare unfavourably, as regards carrying capacity, with river transport, even such a line would require fresh bridges,|| of which there were many, and much earthwork ; whereas the existing bridges would carry a 2 ft. 6 in. line, for which also less additional earthwork would be required. Moreover, time was a most important factor, and even a 2 ft. 6 in. line would be very useful to supplement the river transport.

On the 22nd April the Chief of the Imperial General Staff ordered the construction of the Nasiriya line to be carried out as rapidly as possible. The Qurna—Amara line could not be commenced till the floods had subsided, and there was some further discussion over its gauge before the 2 ft. 6 in. line was

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* Most of the flies had died from the heat.

† Volume II., Chapter XXII, page 281.

‡ By then about 45 miles of 2 ft. 6 in. gauge material had been landed there for use at and near the base.

§ Qurna was chosen as starting point in order to avoid having to bridge the two arms of the Euphrates between there and Basra.

|| Most of these would have to open to allow of the passage of water traffic.

decided on about a month later. Material and rolling stock for both lines were supplied from India, necessitating in that country the closing down of some lines and the stoppage of progress on others. On the 16th June General Lake reported that it was estimated that the Nasiriya line would take seven months and the Tigris line five months to complete. The 2 ft. 6 in. line from Shaikh Saad to Sinn was meanwhile progressing but slowly owing to the shortage of steamers for getting the material to the front.

On the 30th June the Chief of the Imperial General Staff intimated that, unless it was feasible to push on the construction of both the Nasiriya and Tigris railways simultaneously, the military situation rendered work on the Nasiriya line the more important of the two; and he enquired if it would not be an improvement, both from a defence and a supply point of view, to draw back, down the river, part of the Tigris Corps. General Lake, however, did not agree and stated that he was quite able to carry out the construction of both lines simultaneously. He considered that the Turks would find it more profitable to employ any available forces to strike at our Tigris communications via the Hai than to attempt an advance by the Euphrates, which would require a large force and considerable preparations, of which he must receive ample warning. He did not consider it advisable to withdraw any of the Tigris Corps for several reasons. The weakness of Baratoff's force allowed the Turks to transfer troops from Persia to the Tigris; General Gorringe's four divisions only averaged a strength of 6,400 each, as reinforcing drafts did little more than replace casualties, and with four divisions at the front it was possible to give one of them a periodical rest; Shaikh Saad was a healthier and more suitable location for a reserve than Amara, Basra or elsewhere; and it was easier and quicker to move a division downstream in case of necessity than to send one up. It was accordingly essential to improve arrangements for supplying the Tigris Corps by pushing on the Qurna—Amara railway.

On the 28th June General Baratoff telegraphed to General Lake that, under pressure of Turkish forces five times as strong as his own, he was retiring towards Kermanshah; and he suggested that it was a favourable opportunity for the British to advance towards Baghdad. General Lake replied that with four Turkish divisions strongly entrenched in front of him and in the intense heat of the Tigris valley it was a most unfavourable time for an extended offensive. Consequently, though he

was ready to take advantage of any opportunity that offered, he could not promise to advance. This reply met with the approval of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

In point of fact General Baratoff found it necessary to retire well beyond Kermanshah and the Turks occupied that place on the 1st July. News of this led the British Minister at Tehran to telegraph to the Foreign Office and India on the 5th July offering the opinion that the Turks would soon occupy Hamadan,* when they would, he said, be able to command the Russian communications with Tehran ; and he pointed out that no force existed which could hope to oppose a Turkish advance on Tehran. This telegram appeared to the Commander-in-Chief in India to disclose such an alteration in the situation that he considered it necessary to telegraph at once to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff and General Lake. Sir Beauchamp Duff pointed out that Baratoff's defeat and the Turkish occupation of Kermanshah prevented co-operation between the Russians and ourselves and opened to the enemy the road eastwards through Persia ; and we must expect, he continued, that the use of this road, even by small hostile parties, would render the situation in Afghanistan very serious.† As he understood that the light railway from Shaikh Saad to Sinn would be completed on the 7th July, enabling General Gorringe to maintain a force on the Hai, he considered that the Persian situation demanded a British offensive on the Tigris, where it was quite possible that the Turks had reduced the size of their force in order to concentrate against Baratoff.

Replying to this telegram next day, General Lake did not agree that, from a military point of view, the situation was as serious as the Tehran telegram seemed to indicate ; and he did not consider that the possession of Hamadan would enable the Turks to command the communications between Russia and Tehran. Excluding detachments on his communications, Baratoff was believed to have about 5,500 sabres, 6,700 rifles and 26 guns, while at most the Turkish strength eastward of Khaniqin was 1,700 sabres, 17,000 rifles and 45 guns. If the Turks occupied Hamadan, their 222 mile line of communication from Baghdad would be prolonged to 325 miles ; and he found it difficult to see how they could continue their advance to

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* They did so on the 10th August.

† The contingency of Afghanistan entering the war against us at this time appeared so likely that the Indian authorities were actively engaged in plans to meet it, and H.M. Government had earmarked two divisions in Egypt to reinforce the Indian frontier force in case of hostilities there.

Tehran, a further distance of 194 miles, without a considerable halt for collection of transport and supplies, for reorganisation of their line of communication and for the arrival of reinforcements. If a resumption of the offensive on the Tigris was called for by the Imperial situation, General Lake said that he could order General Gorringe to attack, or endeavour to turn, the enemy positions; but the intense heat* would cause very great losses from sickness and the supply difficulties precluded anything but a strictly limited offensive. He concluded his telegram by saying that he himself was going up to the Tigris front in three or four days' time.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff replied to the Commander-in-Chief in India on the 6th July that he felt he could do no more than refer to his instructions of the 30th April. If General Lake considered he had a favourable opportunity he had full authority to take the offensive, and Baratoff's retirement rendered an offensive all the more necessary. But Sir William Robertson understood that General Lake did not consider an offensive feasible. Moreover, he could not be sent any more troops and to lengthen his communications would increase his difficulties.

The Order of Battle of the Tigris Corps and the distribution of the remaining British forces in Mesopotamia on the 15th July, 1916, is given in Appendices XXXI and XXXII; the authorised establishment of Force "D" was about 41,500 British and 54,500 Indian combatants, with over 32,000 Indian followers;† and it seems advisable to refer here to some of the main changes that had occurred in the force since the end of April.

There had been recently several alterations in the higher commands. General Maude had taken over command of the Tigris Corps on the 11th July, vice General Gorringe; Brigadier-General W. de S. Cayley of the 39th Brigade succeeded General Maude in command of the 13th Division; Major-General A. S. Cobbe had taken over command of the 7th Division vice General Younghusband; on the Euphrates, General Brooking was commanding the 15th Division, formed in May of the 12th, 34th and 42nd Brigades; and Brigadier-General S. F. Crocker

* General Lake pointed out that the Russians and Turks were fighting at an altitude of 4,800 feet and over, while his own force was practically at sea level.

† The ration returns of the period show a daily average strength of nearly 150,000, but, as these numbers include followers and local native labour, they afford no guide to effective strengths, which at this time were practically all below establishment to a greater or less extent.

had succeeded General Stephen in command of the 6th Cavalry Brigade.

The composite battalions organised under the stress of circumstances during the Kut relief operations were reforming in their original component battalions; and three British and six Indian battalions were being or had been raised to replace those of the same designation made prisoner at Kut, i.e., 2nd Norfolk, 2nd Dorsetshire, 1st Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, 48th Pioneers, 67th Punjabis, 2/7th Gurkhas, 2/22nd Punjabis, 2/103rd Mahrattas and 2/119th Infantry.

The 13th Division cavalry squadron* and cyclist company had arrived from Europe; three Sapper companies (1st, 18th and Tehri-Garhwal) and No. 3 Bridging Train from India; and the Patiala Lancers, 14th Sikhs and 2/10th Gurkhas from Egypt. On the other hand, the 11th Rajputs from Bushire and the remnant of the 41st Dogras from the 7th Division had returned to India.

Some units of a Stokes Mortar Brigade, to be organised in twelve 4-gun (3-inch Stokes mortars) batteries lettered A to M, from England were with the Tigris Corps; two 13-pounder anti-aircraft guns had also arrived; "S" Battery, R.H.A., was again completed with six guns; and the 222nd Brigade, R.F.A. (formerly 1/3rd Home Counties Brigade), organised in three 4-gun 18-pounder batteries, had replaced the 1/1st Home Counties Brigade, withdrawn for rearmament to India.†

At the end of May General Lake had asked for two additional brigades of 18-pounders, one battery each of 6-inch and 8-inch howitzers, a battery of 60-pounders to replace his 4-inch guns, and 4·5-inch howitzers to replace his twenty-four 5-inch howitzers. It was not possible to meet all these demands, but two old pattern 6-inch howitzers were sent from Egypt, and arrangements were made to send him twenty-four 4·5-inch howitzers (to replace the 5-inch) and a battery of 60-pounders.

In May, sufficient Vickers guns having arrived to give four to every infantry battalion, the sixteen machine guns of each infantry brigade were organised into machine gun companies; and soon afterwards arrangements were made to send out four Lewis guns for each infantry battalion.

No. 596 Mechanical Transport Company, A.S.C., had arrived in January at Basra from Egypt equipped with 30-cwt. lorries‡

* "D" Squadron, 1/1st Hertfordshire Yeomanry.

† 18-pounder guns were now being sent out from England to re-arm the Territorial artillery sent out in 1914 with 15-pounders.

‡ Colonel Leland in "With the M.T. in Mesopotamia," says that they were of the usual 3-ton type but were marked "Load not to exceed 30 cwt."

and, from the experiences gained from their use, General Lake had reported that this class of transport could be usefully employed out of the rainy season and had asked for two more companies; and in June No. 695 Mechanical Transport Company arrived and was allocated for duty at Basra.

It had been decided to send to Mesopotamia the Meerut Cavalry Brigade from France, but it had not yet arrived.

The Air units consisted of No. 14 R.N.A.S. Kite Balloon Section and No. 30 Squadron, R.F.C. The seaplanes had been withdrawn in June, reducing the total number of pilots in Mesopotamia to seven; but after this, the squadron was rapidly built up both in pilots and machines and on the 9th July nineteen pilots were on the strength. The War Office were unable to maintain more than one squadron at this time in Mesopotamia owing to more urgent demands elsewhere.

During July the situation on the Tigris front remained generally unchanged, the most important events being the commencement of the *Shamal*, which began to blow on the 20th, bringing great relief to the force,* and the completion at the end of the month of the light railway from Shaikh Saad to Twin Canals.†

On the 29th July General Lake reported to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff the conclusions he had arrived at after some days of close consultation at the front with General Maude. His river craft were still inadequate to allow of any appreciable advance and were further handicapped for the time being by the low state of the river. He and General Maude both considered that any but a purely local offensive was inadvisable for the following reasons. Owing to the effects of the great heat he had been obliged to stop the despatch of British drafts to the front. Tents could not be carried in an advance and the country was shadeless. The health of the force had suffered from the heat and there was a deficiency of helmets, goggles and mosquito nets, while his shortage of river transport had prevented his sending up to the front the full quantity of supplies, tents, etc. Training also had suffered from the heat, the casualties and the lack of experienced officers and non-commissioned officers; and a large proportion of the average unit consisted of half-trained drafts. All animals had been on short rations for some time and required feeding up and conditioning; and equipment, especially harness and vehicles,

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* The troops had been suffering for some little time from average daily shade temperatures of over 120°F.

† On the 1st August one train began running daily on this section.

needed thorough overhauling. The land transport at the front had already all the work it was capable of, and owing to river transport difficulties the light railway to Sinn Abtar would not be completed for another two or three weeks.

The enemy did not appear to have withdrawn troops from the Tigris to any considerable extent, but he was being closely watched and any opportunity that offered would not be missed.

> General Lake concluded : " To sum up and taking all these points into consideration, I am of opinion that, unless circumstances should arise which imperatively demand offensive action at once, our policy should be to consolidate our present position, give our troops at the front an opportunity of recuperating after the severe heat to which they are now exposed, and—by completing them with drafts, equipment and supplies and giving them a course of careful training—to get them into the best possible condition to resume operations when climate and an increase in our river and land transport places us in a position to resume the offensive with effect. General Maude agrees with this. The spirit of the troops is good."

Replying on the 31st July, Sir William Robertson expressed his agreement with the above, as being in accordance with the spirit of his instructions of the 30th April, which he saw no reason to modify.

By this time the efficiency of No. 30 Squadron, R.F.C., had been much increased by the arrival of a number of additional and experienced pilots and of up-to-date aeroplanes. Major N. D. K. MacEwen arrived on the 31st July to take up the appointment of Deputy Assistant Director of Aviation, and with him also arrived Major J. E. Tennant, R.F.C., to command No. 30 Squadron in place of Major S. D. Massy who had been invalided in June. The efforts of the rehabilitated squadron were first directed to lowering the *moral* of the enemy's air service by air combats and bombing raids against aerodromes ; and in these they were so successful that it was not long before British supremacy in the air became thoroughly re-established.

At the beginning of August, the safety of the oilfields appeared to be in danger from hostile sections of the Bakhtiaris ; and General Lake decided to reinforce Ahwaz with half a battalion of infantry and two guns, to be followed by further troops if necessary. The importance of taking steps to assure the supply of oil, which had been frequently emphasised by the Admiralty, had increased owing to the local requirements of oil fuel for the expeditionary force.

As related in the preceding volume,* the War Office had taken over, in February 1916, the general direction of the operations in Mesopotamia, while the Commander-in-Chief in India—which country remained the main base for the expedition—continued to administer the force.

In practice, this division of responsibility was found to have many drawbacks. General Lake's reports showed that the fighting efficiency of his force was much hampered by administrative deficiencies and difficulties, and more and more evidence reached the United Kingdom of the hardships being endured by our men in Mesopotamia and the sufferings of the sick and wounded there. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff, after enquiries and offers of assistance by the War Office, and ascertaining also that the difficulties of the line of communication were not diminishing as quickly as had been hoped, came to the conclusion that the resources of India were no longer adequate, either in men or material, to cope efficiently with the situation, while the War Office, owing to the successful organisation of the national resources, was by this time in a position to supply most, if not all, that was required.

The question was considered on the 18th July by the War Committee of the Cabinet, and they decided that it was advisable to remove the restrictions on the War Office responsibility for the operations as laid down in the order of February, 1916; and the India Office and Army Council were directed to concert a more precise definition of the arrangements for control of the operations.† The result was that orders were issued that while India was to remain the main base of the force in Mesopotamia and that force was to continue to be administered by the Commander-in-Chief in India, that officer was in future to receive his instructions from, and be responsible to, the Army Council in regard to all matters of personnel, administration and supply of the force, and, further, that he would be assisted by such officers as the Army Council might deem it desirable to appoint. The Government of India were to use the resources of that country for meeting the needs of the force as far as possible without trenching on the supplies necessary for the maintenance of her own defence.

During the four hot weather months, May to August, the British force at Nasiriya and on the Euphrates (the 15th

* Chapter XXII.

† In a private letter to Lord Chelmsford written the next day, Mr. Chamberlain said that he had not understood that the War Office responsibility had been restricted, as he had regarded them as entirely superseding his authority.

Division under General Brooking) experienced on the whole a quiet and uneventful time. The main reasons for this were the absence of any Turkish force in its vicinity and the inveterate hostility to the Turks of the Shiah populations of Karbala and Najaf and of many of the neighbouring Arabs.

For the British also a portion of the Arab population constituted a source of some trouble, and General Brooking's work was often more of a political than a military nature. Acting under Turkish instigation, the Shammar and Muntafik Shaikhs, Ibn Rashid and Ajaimi, at times attempted to give us trouble; but they met with little support locally and a few minor operations, more in the nature of police than of serious military work, sufficed to keep them and other disturbers of the peace in order. The degenerate Marsh Arabs* in the neighbourhood of the Hammar lake were always too disunited by internal strife to give us serious cause for anxiety. Moreover, they as well as the merchants, land-owners and other Arab settlers in the rich districts bordering the Euphrates, soon came to appreciate the material advantages attending a settled government, which did not interfere unduly with their internal tribal arrangements, and which administered justice equitably and quickly at the hands of its young military-political officers. Some of the Arabs indeed gave us assistance against the Turks; and a corps of Arab scouts, enrolled at Nasiriya from most of the surrounding tribes, performed useful patrol and intelligence service.

During May and June practically the whole area was inundated, and at one period it was necessary to call on every male inhabitant of the city to assist the troops in keeping the floods from invading Nasiriya.

The day temperatures averaged 110° to 120° and, owing to the neighbouring inundated and cultivated areas, the air was muggy and oppressive except when a wind sprung up. The nights were usually cool, but there were many mosquitoes. The conditions of life were, however, far better than on the Tigris, owing mainly to the absence of hostilities and the large quantities of supplies procured locally. From the first a large number of the troops were in huts, and by August practically all were; the erection of these huts was facilitated by the existence of tall reeds growing everywhere among the waters. Ice was generally available for the hospitals, and it was even found possible to provide *punkahs* for many of the hospitals

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* As stated in Volume I., Chapter I., they are non-Arab in origin.

and huts before the end of the hot weather. Though existence was necessarily monotonous, especially for those in posts on the line of communication, the country along the Euphrates, where there were a fair number of trees, was more pleasing in appearance than the Tigris desert, and the general outlook was rendered more interesting by the greater amount of local traffic. There was, however, much sickness, the principal sufferers being the young and unacclimatised personnel of the reinforcing drafts. But, on the whole, the force under General Brooking was well contented and the cheeriness of its members struck all new-comers.

In India, during May, it became evident that the fall of Kut had had little effect either internally or on the North-West Frontier. Its capture had so frequently before been reported in the bazaars that the actual occurrence had made little impression. Mahomedans generally were not displeased at our failure to reach Baghdad, though most of them attributed this to supernatural and religious causes rather than to the fighting powers of the Turks. The Amir of Afghanistan still maintained his neutrality and it seemed unlikely that anything short of the arrival in Afghanistan of Turkish or German troops would induce him to depart from this attitude. He was understood to hold the opinion that Turkey would not survive the war, that Persia would remain weak and that Afghanistan would be the only live independent Mahomedan state remaining in the East.

At this time the Arab rising against Turkey under the leadership of the Sharif of Mecca was imminent, but the Indian authorities did not welcome the idea. They did not conceal their opinion that such action would be regarded by very many Mahomedans in and on the borders of India as having been inspired by us and consequently as Christian interference with their religion; the Government of India anticipated that the Sharif's authority would be insufficient to prevent Arabs in Mesopotamia from joining the Turks; and they mistrusted some members of his family for their well-known anti-Russian and anti-French sentiments. The Sharif raised the standard of revolt at the beginning of June; and it soon became clear that large numbers of Mahomedans in India and on the North-West Frontier regarded him and his Arabs as enemies of Islam and reproached him both for betraying the Caliph and for endangering Moslem control over the Islamic holy places. This fear of the domination and control over the holy places by non-Moslems in consequence of the Arab revolt was widely spread,

and at times caused the authorities in India considerable trouble and anxiety. Moreover, in July, the Turco-German Mission in Kabul began sending Turkish officers and emissaries to raise the frontier tribes on our side of the border in a *jahad* by exploiting this feeling ; and in this they were encouraged and supported by many of the frontier *mullas*.*

The improvement in the situation in South Persia in June, owing to the success of the Sykes Mission, as well as the control over eastward egress from Persia of hostile bands that Russian and our own activities along the East Persia Cordon had effected, lessened the anxiety in India regarding the situation in Afghanistan. On the other hand, the defeat and withdrawal of General Baratoff in North-West Persia was regarded as tending to open again the way eastward for hostile parties and the effect of the telegram of the 5th July on this subject from the British Minister at Tehran has already been described. The military authorities in India, who had found it very difficult, owing to the long and indifferent desert line of communication, to maintain their portion of the East Persia Cordon, decided that it was very necessary to be prepared for all eventualities ; and they recommended the extension of the Quetta-Nushki railway towards the Persian frontier as far as Dalbandin. The Governor-General's Council in India did not approve of the idea. They considered that it had no merits politically or commercially ; they were not persuaded of its military necessity ; and, in addition to its heavy cost, its construction would take away rails and rolling stock which were very badly needed in India. The question was, however, referred to His Majesty's Government, and they decided on the 22nd August on its construction.

The revelations that had been made in regard to hardships and sufferings of our men in Mesopotamia and criticisms on the conduct of the operations there had led to the appointment in August by His Majesty's Government of a Commission to enquire into the matter ; and it was decided to recall the Commander-in-Chief in India to London to give evidence before it, General Sir Charles Monro being selected to replace Sir Beauchamp Duff in India.

In August also the War Committee decided that General Lake was to be relieved in chief command of Force "D" by a younger officer, following the procedure which had recently been followed in other theatres of war. General Lake was known to be in anything but robust health ; he had already spent seven very arduous and trying months in Mesopotamia

* Mahomedan priests.

and it was understood that the strain and climate were telling on him. The selection of his successor was left to the Army Council, who appointed General Maude. As pointed out by General Callwell in his "Life of Sir Stanley Maude" this appointment was one for which Sir William Robertson was entirely responsible. General Maude was a junior Major-General and had no experience of India or Indian troops, who composed the greater part of Force "D." But the Chief of the Imperial General Staff knew his man and, as circumstances were to prove, had estimated his value correctly.

> General Callwell continues: "Maude arrived at Basra on the 24th August, and he then enjoyed the advantage of spending some days in consultation with Sir Percy Lake before that general sailed for England on the 28th. There was a bond of sympathy and a complete understanding between the outgoing chief and his successor; for no one realised better than Maude what difficulties had been contended with and in many instances overcome during the past eight months under most trying conditions by the responsible head in Mesopotamia. 'I am more sorry than I can say for him,' Maude wrote home when announcing to his family his advancement to the chief command, 'and have a great admiration for him; for he has battled splendidly against ill-health practically all through.' This feeling was common throughout the force. One of General Cobbe's first acts on assuming control of the Tigris Corps* was to despatch a gracefully worded message of farewell on behalf of all ranks under his orders to the departing Commander-in-Chief."

The distribution of the British forces in Mesopotamia on the 27th August, the last day of General Lake's command, is given in Appendix XXXIII. Since the 15th July there had been a few changes in the force. The 157th Battery, R.G.A. (four 60-pounders), had reached Basra from India and the 7th Indian Cavalry Brigade from France had also begun to arrive,† while three Indian cavalry regiments and three Indian infantry battalions were being, or had been, relieved by units from India.‡

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* Major-General A. S. Cobbe was appointed to succeed General Maude.

† This brigade consisted of "V" Battery, R.H.A., 13th Hussars, 13th and 14th Lancers and a machine gun squadron, under command of Brigadier-General L. C. Jones. The two Indian regiments came from India to relieve the two from France.

‡ 7th Lancers, 16th and 33rd Cavalry by the 10th Lancers, 21st and 22nd Cavalry; 89th Punjabis, 2/103rd Mahrattas and 2/10th Gurkhas by the 8th Rajputs, 91st Punjabis and 105th Mahrattas.

Naval gunboats with armed and partially armoured launches were distributed along the Tigris and Euphrates to assist in the protection from raids of these lines of communication. The naval personnel suffered considerably from the effects of the heat, but most of them were sent in turns to recuperate for a while in the hills in Ceylon or India.

The general situation was unchanged and the maintenance and supply of the force still remained the main difficulty. The Turkish advance in Persia to Hamadan, however, lessened the enemy's ability to transfer forces from there to the Tigris; and arrangements were consequently made to withdraw the 13th Division and two cavalry regiments to Amara. This would ease the supply situation and would at the same time allow a necessary reserve of supplies to be built up at Shaikh Saad.

The strength and dispositions of the Turkish Sixth Army were estimated by the British as follows. Their XIII Corps, thought to consist of the 2nd, 6th and another division and a cavalry brigade, with a strength of 1,700 sabres, 16,300 rifles and 50 guns, was thought to be on the Persian front; their XVIII Corps (45th, 51st and 52nd Divisions) on the Tigris front with a strength of 680 sabres, 14,200 rifles and 64 guns; and at Baghdad a constant strength of about 4,500 including convalescents and drafts. Captain Muhammad Amin in "Baghdad and the Story of its Last Fall" says that the Turkish strength on the Tigris at this time did not exceed 10,000 rifles and 52 guns and that the 44th and 37th Regiments, of the 51st and 52nd Divisions respectively, had been withdrawn from the Tigris and sent to Persia.

The Turks occupied Hamadan on the 10th August and General Baratoff with his main force fell back towards Kazvin, taking up a position to threaten the northern flank of any Turkish advance on Tehran. At the same time he suggested to the Russian Minister at Tehran that it might become necessary to evacuate Tehran and Isfahan; and acting on this both the British and Russian Ministers made preparations to leave Tehran. The Commander-in-Chief in India telegraphed to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff pointing out the undesirable and far-reaching consequences of such a move and suggested that if the Russians at Isfahan were cut off from Baratoff they might join hands with Sir Percy Sykes, who had reached Yezd on the 14th August from Kerman with a small Indian force of 80 sabres, 2 mountain guns and 380 rifles; and the Foreign Office sent orders that the British Legation Staff were not to leave Tehran till the last moment necessary

to prevent capture by the Turks, while they authorised the British Minister to arrange for joint action by the Russians at Isfahan with Sir Percy Sykes. The Russian force at Isfahan, consisting of 600 Cossacks with two guns, soon found themselves threatened by a large body of Bakhtiaris, with some field guns and stiffened by some Turkish regulars and German officers. But Sir Percy Sykes with his small force reached Isfahan on the 11th September, when the Turks and Bakhtiaris retired.

On assuming command in Mesopotamia, with the task of retrieving the situation caused by the failure to reach Baghdad, General Lake had, as previously described, found himself faced by very great difficulties. In view of the climatic and natural physical difficulties of the country, the conduct of the military operations and the control of political relations with the local warlike tribes formed sufficiently difficult problems. But these were further complicated by the extent of the area in which the force was dispersed, by the inadequate and imperfectedly organised base and lines of communication, the shortage of river and land transport, the lack of labour and local resources, the want in every branch and arm of the force of sufficient trained officers and personnel and last, but not least, by the scanty and insufficient medical organisation and arrangements.

To effect the necessary improvements, time and material assistance from sources outside Mesopotamia were required. But time was not available, for extended operations with increased forces had to be pushed on as rapidly as possible; and the necessary assistance from outside sources was not forthcoming as quickly as the local circumstances required. The result was that at the end of April General Lake was still faced with very great difficulties.

A brief account of what General Lake had effected in the way of improvements in February, March and April has been given in Volume II, and it is now necessary to describe briefly what he achieved from April to the end of August. The authorities in India and England had become thoroughly alive to the necessities of the situation and were doing all they could to assist. But the arrival of the monsoon in May, stopping the despatch of river steamers, delayed progress; and although, when General Lake gave up the command, the difficulties had by no means been overcome, he had laid the foundations of the organisation which finally brought us success.

After the fall of Kut, all his efforts were devoted to the task of improving the position and condition of the troops at the

front as much as possible. But, as he frequently reported, the crux of the whole question was the continued shortage of river transport. The number of available river steamers and tugs had risen from a total of forty-five on the 25th March to fifty-six by the time that the south-west monsoon stopped their further despatch from overseas, and by the end of August this total had increased only to sixty-four. In the same period the total number of barges had risen only from seventy-nine to ninety, and of these three had been sunk at Fallahiya by Turkish gunfire. There had been many disappointments in the arrival of fresh craft. Twenty-seven steamers and tugs and twenty-six barges had sunk at sea; and of the seventeen steamers and tugs and forty-three barges ordered from the India Office in August, 1915 and expected to arrive in Mesopotamia by May, 1916, none were in commission when General Lake left Mesopotamia. A part of the consignment had reached Abadan, but the arrangements made in England for their assembly there had broken down.

With the steamers available the average daily amount which could be delivered at the Tigris front at the end of August amounted to 460 tons, whereas 380 tons of supplies alone (allowing animals only three-quarter rations) were required at the front for daily use. Even this was an improvement on the state of affairs which had existed before August; as from May to July the average daily amount that could be delivered varied from 360 to 400 tons against an average daily requirement (supplies only) of 500 to 560 tons. But the force required many things besides supplies, and the urgent demands for the Tigris Corps included such items as large tents, material for hot weather shelters, railway material, pumps, water pipes and motor lorries. A good deal of grain and fodder had been obtained locally after the harvest at and above Amara and this had eased the supply question; on the other hand the scale of rations had been increased, four steamers and eight barges had been allotted permanently for hospital work and the falling river had necessitated a reduction in the cargoes carried. *Mahailas* were employed to supplement the steamer service, but they were an uncertain means of transport; and many of them had to be employed to accumulate gradually a much required reserve of supplies at Amara.

Matters would improve, however, as soon as the monsoon was over, for, largely as a result of General Lake's urgent representations, arrangements had been made for the supply from India and England of the following additional craft:—

56 river steamers, 83 tugs, 80 launches and 233 barges or lighters, as well as 27 river steamers, 34 launches and 32 barges for hospital and medical use.

A further difficulty affecting the river craft was caused by the very limited local facilities for the large amount of reconstruction and repair work required. Messrs. Lynch Brothers had a shipyard at Maqil and the Anglo-Persian Oil Company had yards at Mohammerah and Abadan (worked by Messrs. Strick, Scott & Co.), of which the last was the largest and best equipped of the three. In 1915-16 the Admiralty had sent out gunboats to be put together at Abadan and the work had been done efficiently and with expedition; but in 1916 the arrangements made by the India Office for the assembly of river craft there under the supervision of their own representative broke down completely owing to a variety of reasons. At the beginning of July this led General Lake to intervene to draw the attention of the India Office to the unsatisfactory state of affairs and its resultant effects on the force in Mesopotamia, with the result that the Secretary of State for India at once telegraphed for a full report; and, a few days later, when they assumed administrative control of Force "D," the War Office took urgent steps to rectify matters. Among these were orders to Lieutenant-Colonel Grey (see below) to start the erection of an independent shipyard. This was put up at Maqil, and soon assumed large proportions.

With the increase of the force in Mesopotamia at the beginning of 1916, traffic in the port of Basra so increased as to tax greatly the working capacity for its administration of the Principal Marine Transport officer (Captain Huddleston, Royal Indian Marine), with his small staff. Sir George Buchanan had arrived on the 1st January, 1916, having been sent from India as Director-General of Port Administration and River Conservancy, but, as mentioned before, his services had been mainly devoted to river conservancy work and his duties as regards port administration had been settled locally as being merely advisory. General Lake realised that some change in the system of port administration would be necessary sooner or later, but he considered it would be inopportune to attempt it while the pressure due to the Kut relief operations was at its highest and also before Sir George Buchanan had got his conservancy schemes into working order.

Early in April Sir George Buchanan went to India for a few weeks to expedite the despatch of dredgers and other requirements; and while he was there orders were sent to General

Lake from India that on his return Sir George Buchanan was to take over responsibility for both port administration and river conservancy. Under further instructions from India and after discussion with General Lake, two committees in Mesopotamia sat in June and July to consider and report on the whole river fleet organisation. For it had become clear from General Lake's reports that the whole question required a thorough sifting. One committee, with Sir George Buchanan as president, went into the number and nature of vessels required and a system for their repair; while the other, presided over by Brigadier-General G. F. MacMunn,* dealt with organisation, including the provision of personnel and a system of working traffic. The reports of these two committees were completed by the beginning of August, but action on them was deferred till Lieutenant-Colonel W. H. Grey, R.E.—who had just arrived with an expert staff from England—had time to consider the question.

Colonel Grey's original instructions in June were that, as an adviser to the Inspector-General of Communications, he was to investigate thoroughly the river transport arrangements and report on them to the War Office. But ten days after they had assumed administrative control of the force the War Office telegraphed to General Lake that Colonel Grey was to take over control of the whole river transport as soon as he felt in a position to do so. This he did on the 7th September.

One of the main results of General Lake's efforts was the improvement that had been effected in the base at Basra. The miles of embankments he had caused to be built had safeguarded from the floods of 1916 an area of about 48 square miles; and in this area new accommodation had been provided for some 15,000 troops, and some 7,000 sick, as well as for the large number of animals and great quantities of stores passing through and remaining at the base. Wharves had been constructed which ocean-going steamers were able to come alongside to unload; and roads with several substantial bridges had been built to connect the different camps, hospitals, stores, offices and wharves. Makina Masus became the main camp for troops and Maqil the main base depôt for ordnance and supplies. Although a good deal remained to be done and the coming months were to see considerable further improvements and extensions, Basra was at last well on its way to become an adequate and efficient base.

* General MacMunn had arrived, at General Lake's request, on the 15th April, to take over the appointment of Inspector-General of Communications, vacated by General Davison.

The shortage of labour, owing to the difficulties of recruiting both locally and in India, still hampered greatly the work of all the administrative services. Four labour or porter corps had reached Basra by the end of April and since then General Lake, who had only been able to raise two corps locally, had asked India for nine more. But so far, only three of these had been provided.

The land transport hitherto used in the operations had consisted for the most part of pack mules and mule-drawn army transport carts of the small Indian pattern; and the total amount had never been sufficient to give the force a satisfactory radius of action. General Lake had been very anxious to rectify this, but had so far been prevented by his inability to feed more animals at the front. Consequently, he had been obliged to limit himself to arranging for the purchase of a considerable number of mules in Persia and of camels locally, to be organised in corps by the time his river transport would admit of their being maintained at the front. By the end of August a number of animals had been obtained and their organisation was proceeding satisfactorily. Two mechanical transport companies had arrived, another was on its way, and three further companies had been asked for at the beginning of July, when requests for more motor ambulances, motor cars, motor cycles and armoured cars had been despatched.

Of the railways under construction, twenty-six miles of the Nasiriya line had been constructed, six miles of the Qurna–Amara line laid, and the light line from Shaikh Saad to Sinn was almost complete.

During March and April there had been a distinct improvement in the medical arrangements, both in the evacuation of casualties and in increased hospital accommodation.* But much still remained to be done if the medical organisation was to be put on a basis that would no longer arouse the widespread indignation that the revelations of the sufferings of the sick and wounded in Mesopotamia had called forth. At the beginning of May, Surgeon-General F. H. Treherne arrived at Basra from France to take over the appointment of Director of Medical Services. He at once took energetically in hand a thorough reorganisation, the progress of which was thereafter steadily continued until the desired results were attained.†

* A few motor and horse-drawn ambulances had reached the Tigris front and had been of the greatest assistance.

† For details see Volume IV of the Medical History of the War by Major-General Sir W. G. Macpherson and Major T. J. Mitchell.

Owing to the shortage of river transport, the evacuation of sick from the field medical units at the front was very difficult, and throughout the hot weather these units were always overcrowded. At the beginning of June twenty-four medical officers arrived to form the nucleus of a unit designated " River Sick Convoy " and by the end of August a marked improvement had taken place in the evacuation conditions.

Amara and Basra still remained the two main hospital centres and arrangements were made to increase the accommodation to take about 20,000 cases, including all hospital centres ; and by the middle of August this had been accomplished, as well as the location of stationary hospitals at Shaikh Saad. At first, at all these places emergency accommodation had to be resorted to and full advantage taken of the capacity to evacuate to India.

As already mentioned, the health of the whole force during the hot weather months was most unsatisfactory and the casualties from sickness were very heavy. In addition to many thousands treated locally, nearly 11,000 officers and men were invalided out of the country in June, over 12,000 in July and 11,000 in August. The regular hospital ships running between India and Basra were unable to cope with this number and consequently, until August, hired transports had to be utilised to carry the less serious cases ; and owing to the deficiencies in medical personnel it was not found possible to provide all of these with an adequate medical staff.*

Intestinal diseases, fevers of various kinds, jaundice and the effects of heat were the principal diseases among British troops. Among contributory causes for so much illness were the great heat, prolonged and intensified by the delayed arrival of the *Shamal*, the lack at the front of tents and helmets of a suitable pattern, the frequent deficiences in hot-weather clothing, the lack of ice,† vegetables and other amenities to relieve the heat effects. Moreover, the reinforcing drafts proved to be particularly susceptible to disease and many from among them went straight into hospital on arrival in the country and then back to India without taking any part in the campaign. Intestinal diseases were also prevalent among the Indian troops, but scurvy was responsible for the greatest number of casualties.

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* Medical units, as well as the reinforcements for them, suffered as heavily from sickness as the rest of the force and all of them were constantly short of officers and men.

† Ice was available in small quantities at Amara and in larger quantities at Basra, but was never sufficient, and at the hottest period its supply broke down altogether owing to sickness among the factory staff.

This was due to the lack of fresh vegetables, which would not keep in the heat, or to the fact that the authorised ration substitutes* were not available.

At Basra, electric fans were installed in many of the hospital wards and arrangements were made to increase these gradually, though it proved to be slowly; and by the end of August similar installations had been commenced at Amara.

A few nursing sisters from India had started work in Mesopotamia in October, 1915. In April, 1916 the first nursing sisters from England (belonging to Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service) arrived, and their number gradually and steadily increased.

* The lime-juice proved unsatisfactory.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SEPTEMBER TO 12TH DECEMBER, 1916.

(MAP 21.)

IT soon became evident, to those in a position to judge, that General Maude's aptitude for the task in hand settled any doubts there may have been concerning his appointment to the chief command in Mesopotamia.

His past experience and study of his profession had given him a detailed grasp of an army's requirements, as well as a sound appreciation of the principles and practice of war ; and he was an indefatigable worker with exceptional powers of concentration. He had, however, the habit of centralising work in his own hands to a greater extent than is usual; this practice he appears to have considered justified by the failures during the former operations, which he attributed partly to the lack of adequately trained staff officers or to apathy and lethargy in some quarters induced by the combined effects of climate and overwork. His own hardy frame and strong constitution enabled him, in spite of the climate, to do more work than most people.

With these qualifications he combined an attractive personality and like most successful commanders he had the faculty of inspiring those under him with the desire to give of their best ; while his solicitude for their welfare and his sympathy in their hardships won the hearts of his British and Indian rank and file, to whom his frequent appearances among them made his soldierly figure quite familiar.

Shortly after hearing that he was to assume command, General Maude expressed the opinion in a private letter to the Deputy Chief of the Imperial General Staff (General Whigham) that the peculiar difficulties of the campaign could and would be surmounted ;* and that his force might very well be able to make substantial progress that autumn, though from what he learnt from General Lake's most recent telegrams it appeared unlikely that it would be in a position to move before November. He considered that the headquarters of the force should be moved nearer to the Tigris front than Basra, as, although there were columns in other directions, the main decision would

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* It was typical of General Maude that he added " and the fact that they exist only makes the situation more interesting and instructive."

have to be sought on the Tigris. He was shortly going to Basra to take over from General Lake and he proposed to stay there for two or three weeks to talk over matters very thoroughly with the Inspector-General of Communications; and after telling his plans to General MacMunn (who held that appointment) and hearing how he proposed to carry out the necessary work, General Maude intended to move with his headquarters up the Tigris. He also considered that the time had come to reorganise the force on the Tigris into two corps of two divisions each. It would simplify organisation and staff work, a great advantage considering how difficult it was to find really first-rate staff officers; it would facilitate and expedite business; it would make the force more flexible to handle in the field; and, as many alterations in command were then being carried out, it seemed an appropriate time to make the change. The staff of the existing corps was, he considered, large enough to furnish sufficient staff for both corps.

While the first three and a half months of General Maude's command were devoted mainly to the completion of the improvements in organisation and general administrative measures necessary to make the force in Mesopotamia an efficient fighting instrument, there was carried out during the first two months of this period a prolonged discussion regarding the policy which was to govern operations and to guide the authorities in Mesopotamia, India and the United Kingdom in making the necessary preparations.

On the 22nd August, the War Committee were apprised of the position by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff in a paper on the "Present Military Situation in Mesopotamia."

In this, Sir William Robertson, after quoting the order of the 30th April defining the policy to be adopted and the motives for it, said that the reasons for retaining troops opposite Kut still existed; for, though the surrender of Kut had not affected unfavourably the situation in South Persia and India, the recent Turkish successes in Persia might have embarrassing results if they were followed by a British withdrawal down the Tigris. At the same time, the health of the troops was bad; and owing to this, to the very defective line of communications and to other causes, the Tigris force was not in a good condition and could only undertake offensive operations to a very limited extent.

After giving the estimated respective strengths of the British and Turkish forces and details concerning British drafts and improvements in armament, Sir William Robertson expressed the hope that by the middle or end of October the effective

strength of the total force in Mesopotamia would amount to 52,800 rifles,* 4,600 sabres and 228 guns.†

Three railways were under construction; additional river craft were being collected in India for despatch after the end of the monsoon or were being constructed in England; and it was hoped that the river transport would be on a sound footing by the end of December.

The Turkish object in driving back Baratoff, continued Sir William Robertson, might be to remove the threat his force constituted to the Turkish line of communication and to contain the Russian force in the hills during the winter with detachments, while they transferred the balance to the Tigris. If this was their intention, the Turks might be able to concentrate and maintain some 60,000 men about Kut; and against such a force the British strength should be sufficient to hold its own. If the Turks made no such move, then our troops could assume the offensive as the situation might demand.

On the 23rd August, the Commander-in-Chief in India telegraphed to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff reviewing the Turkish situation in Mesopotamia and Persia. Baratoff's continued withdrawal and Turkish successes against the Russian line further north gave the Turks more elbow room for operations in Mesopotamia; and the approaching winter, by neutralising the advantages of the Russian position on the Trans-Caucasian front as a factor in the situation, would enable the Turks to concentrate against us in Mesopotamia. We could either remain passive in our present position, thus aiding the Turks and surrendering the initiative, or we could advance to Baghdad, thus aiding the Russians, possibly destroying a part of the Turkish force opposite us and occupying the concentration and supply area which was essential to a large Turkish movement against us in Mesopotamia or to an organised advance through Persia. The risks of such an advance on our part were very heavy, but if the Russians were immobilised by snow and we did not forestall a Turkish concentration by an offensive, it would mean the unmolested advance of superior strength against our forces on the Tigris. This would lead either to a stalemate or to our withdrawal down the Tigris, resulting in the fall of our present influence in South-West Persia, the loss

* General Maude's estimate, sent a fortnight later, was 60,000 rifles.

	Rifles.	Sabres.	Guns.
†Tigris front	37,800	3,500	174
Euphrates front	9,000	200	30
Lines of Communication ..	6,000	900	24

of the oilfields, the opening of the road to Afghanistan and the extension of the present struggle to the frontiers of India

The Commander-in-Chief asked whether a change in the defensive policy in Mesopotamia was contemplated, as seemed to be indicated by the urgent orders from the War Office to expedite the despatch of river craft; and, as the adequacy of these and other necessary administrative preparations could not be properly estimated without full and timely warning of the War Committee's intentions and as time was short, Sir Beauchamp Duff asked that General Maude and he might be taken into the confidence of the War Committee with regard to Mesopotamian operations in the future.

Sir William Robertson replied on the 25th August. The War Committee had ordered no change in the policy; and as reports from Mesopotamia and India showed that no substantial advance at approximately full strength could be made before the 1st December at earliest, there could be no question of an early advance upon Baghdad, however desirable it might be for the reasons Sir Beauchamp Duff had given. All efforts should be concentrated on completing the necessary administrative preparations and on giving the troops ample training; and the question of more active operations would be considered when the force was up to strength and efficient in all respects.

Although the Chief of the Imperial General Staff hoped that the Turkish forces in general would not enjoy quite so free a hand in the winter as Sir Beauchamp Duff appeared to anticipate, he agreed that we must be prepared to see them reinforce their Tigris force as soon as the snow rendered active operations in Trans-Caucasia difficult. Sir William Robertson, then quoting the figures of the combatants on the Tigris which he had given the War Committee on the 22nd, as well as the general conclusions he had come to, explained that it had been with a view to remedying the unsatisfactory conditions in Mesopotamia and to rendering the force there fit to meet possible contingencies that the War Office had urged the importance of expediting the arrival of river craft; and not because any change of policy was contemplated which would require additional troops to put into execution. The despatch of further divisions to secondary theatres such as Mesopotamia would not, he said, facilitate the successful prosecution of the war in general and must therefore be avoided if possible. It was very important that no time should be lost in rendering the force capable of carrying out such tasks as might devolve on it, and the communications should be such as would provide a liberal

margin for eventualities besides being amply sufficient for the force as it was.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that he would try and supply any further guidance required and he would be glad to receive such further observations as Sir Beauchamp Duff and General Maude, to whom these instructions should be communicated, might wish to make.

On the 29th General Maude replied deprecating strongly the assumption of the offensive before the river communications had been considerably developed. The time required for this was being usefully employed in making forward positions tactically secure, in training troops and in other necessary preparations. He appreciated fully the necessity for forestalling Turkish initiative, but considered it essential to organise thoroughly before attempting to strike. He was doing all he could to accelerate matters and, once he had effected necessary improvements, he had no fears of being unable to withstand such a Turkish offensive as seemed possible ; and the scope and vigour of the British offensive need only be limited by consideration of the situation in other theatres and by the amount of drafts and munitions he might consequently expect.

On the same day he sent another telegram recommending the formation of the four infantry divisions on the Tigris into two army corps* of the two divisions each, and of the two cavalry brigades into a cavalry division ; and he said that he proposed in the near future to move his own headquarters nearer the front so that he would be better able to control and direct operations on the Tigris.

On the 29th August also, Sir William Robertson sent a telegram addressed to General Maude by name impressing on him, on his assumption of command, the necessity of doing all that was possible to make his force efficient for the work it might be called on to carry out ; and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff emphasised the importance of improving the *moral* of the troops and the defective communications, and of foreseeing the requirements and difficulties of future operations.

On the 30th August, the Grand Duke Nicholas, commanding the Russian Caucasus forces, sent a telegram to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff saying that he had sent reinforcements to General Baratoff to facilitate action by that officer in co-ordination with a movement by the 2nd Caucasus Cavalry Corps, whose objective would be Mosul ; and he asked if the

* As already mentioned, General Maude had explained his ideas concerning this in a letter to the Deputy Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

British proposed to resume active operations in Mesopotamia, and if so when and what would their nature be. Two days later Sir William Robertson replied to the effect that preparations were being made in Mesopotamia with a view to eventualities, but that for climatic and other reasons General Maude was unlikely to be able to assume the offensive before the end of October at the earliest.

At a meeting of the War Committee on the 30th August the Chief of the Imperial General Staff read Sir Beauchamp Duff's telegram of the 23rd and explained why an early offensive was impossible. He was asked if an advance was not contemplated, as it seemed desirable to take Baghdad, and he replied that the force on the Tigris was being got ready to move when opportunity offered.

General Maude's interpretation of the instructions he had received is shown in a memorandum which he sent General Cobbe, commanding the Tigris Corps, for his guidance, on the 1st September. After being told that there was a good prospect of the existing communication and administrative difficulties being remedied within the next two months, General Cobbe was requested to enjoin on all commanding officers the importance of developing the offensive spirit among their men and of training them to manœuvre readily by day and by night. The policy of His Majesty's Government was that the force was to remain on the defensive until the communications and the supply and transport situation had been satisfactorily developed; and that no withdrawal from our forward positions on the Tigris was in contemplation. These positions must, however, be rendered secure against attack and local offensive movements were not debarred should a favourable opportunity occur; but such movements should be of a minor character so as not to indicate to the enemy that we had a definite plan for advancing. In view of future possible operations, great attention should be paid to collecting information concerning the country we might have to traverse; but to avoid putting the enemy on the alert this information should be obtained by aeroplanes rather than by cavalry reconnaissance.

On the 12th September Sir William Robertson sent the following personal and secret telegram to Sir Beauchamp Duff and General Maude. This telegram, it may be noted, expressed an opinion which he had that day given the War Committee, who then asked him to draw out for their information a memorandum on the subject; and he evidently considered it

advisable before doing this to get the opinion of the Indian and Mesopotamian commanders.

> "Because of the drain on our resources and the poor return promised, Mesopotamian operations have always caused me great concern and anxiety. The climatic conditions are of the worst kind and the communications will for long be difficult and never adequate to admit of achieving valuable success. Nor are adequate troops for this success ever likely to be available. We must concentrate all possible strength in main theatres. No appreciable effect on the war would be produced even if we could later occupy Baghdad, and before attempting to go there we must be strong enough to defeat without doubt all enemy concentration feasible. We cannot hope to do this. Further, as now placed, the troops can exercise no direct influence in Persia. I am, therefore, considering withdrawal to Amara, with increase of force at Ahwaz and a strong central reserve in Basra–Ahwaz area ready to act either north, west or east. This plan would safeguard oilfields, command both rivers, perhaps afford better ground for location of troops, and more important still would admit of our making our power felt towards Shiraz and Isfahan and so stop the worrying anxiety about Persia in general. I am not contemplating any reduction of present force. We should have to explain matters to Russia but this could easily be done. Anything is better than continuing the present difficult, costly and objectiveless plan. Wire your views on the general question."

General Maude replied on the 14th September in a long telegram.

If the force in Mesopotamia was to be limited to a mainly watching and passive attitude and if no local considerations were involved, General Robertson's proposal appeared to be the soundest way of dealing with the problem. Personally, he considered that the advantages of the present advanced positions outweighed the disadvantages. They menaced Baghdad and prevented the Turks detaching troops to Persia; whereas, if we withdrew to Amara, the unorganised Arab and other adjacent tribes would be obliged, for their own security, to join the Turks, or, attributing our withdrawal to weakness, would be inclined to give us trouble. In Persia we appeared to be holding our own and the movements of General Sykes and other British officers were having a good effect; but our withdrawal would enable the Turks to reinforce their force in Persia,

when they might overwhelm Baratoff and compel the tribes there also, in their own interest, to join in against us. A withdrawal with the prospect of remaining stationary would also be likely to cause a deterioration in the *moral* of our own troops; and it must be remembered that the farther a position was away from the Persian Gulf the healthier was the climate. The great amount of sickness experienced that summer and the precarious nature of the communications should be remedied by the improvements in progress.

General Maude then went on to suggest that as, owing to the general situation, no general advance seemed feasible, his winter programme should consist of getting a footing on the Hai, thus depriving the Turks of supplies from Hai town; and of occupying Samawa on the Euphrates, and so constituting an additional threat against Baghdad. He quite realised that, regarding the war from a broad aspect, an advance on the part of his force, unaided and as then constituted, to Baghdad would be unwise; but was it not possible that in the spring a renewed Russian offensive in the Caucasus might have sufficiently far-reaching effects to justify us in establishing ourselves there?

General Maude concluded by saying that he had endeavoured not to ignore the wider issues involved, but that necessarily his remarks were based mainly on the situation as it appeared in his immediate surroundings and he imagined that this was what Sir William Robertson wanted.

Sir Beauchamp Duff had, in the meantime, drafted his own views, but he awaited those of General Maude before he sent his reply to Sir William Robertson on the 16th September. His opinion was against a withdrawal for the reasons given by General Maude; and he pointed out further that a withdrawal to Amara would open the roads and resources of Pusht-i-Kuh to the Turks, giving them an approach to Shushtar and the oilfields, and would necessitate the strengthening of our force at Nasiriya so as to secure Basra against attack. It would be necessary to hold the Tigris at Amara with two divisions, and this would leave barely one division for the central reserve; too small a force, he said, to admit of the detachments necessary to make ourselves felt powerfully in the direction of Shiraz and Isfahan. He did not think that Sir William Robertson's proposal, contemplating as it did operations in Persia and complete readiness to move a reserve in either of three directions, would lessen the drain upon our resources.

On the 18th September the question of the future policy to be adopted in Mesopotamia was considered by the War

Committee. It had been arranged that General Monro on his way to India was to visit Mesopotamia, and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff proposed to ask for his opinion;* but before doing so, Sir William Robertson desired to make quite sure that he understood correctly the policy of His Majesty's Government in the matter. He had been unable to find any clear instructions defining exactly the mission of Force "D," which appeared to have been sent originally for protection of the oilfields and pipe line in the vicinity of the Karun river and for the maintenance of our hold on the territories and populations at the head of the Persian Gulf, thus denying hostile access to the Gulf and South Persia.

The instructions of the 30th April, issued with the approval of the War Committee after the surrender of Kut, were only intended to be tentative and Sir William Robertson now submitted a memorandum in which he recapitulated how the policy in Mesopotamia had altered in the last two years. He understood the intention was eventually to occupy Baghdad; and he had expressed the opinion that we had not got, and for an indefinite time were not likely to have available, the number of troops required to seize and hold it. Even if we had them we could not maintain them there owing to long and difficult communications; and their position at Baghdad would in other respects be, in a military sense, unfavourable and exert no decisive effect on the war. About a year previously, before he had been appointed Chief of the Imperial General Staff, he had expressed the same opinion informally to certain members of the War Committee; and he did not think it likely that he would be able to give any other advice until, first, the German armies were much nearer being defeated than they then were, and secondly, until there was a material change in the local situation. In any case there was no prospect of our being able to carry out the operation in the immediate future.

Sir William Robertson urged that the mission should be defined as it had been originally, i.e., as quoted above, and that the question of Baghdad should be left to the future. We could not afford to keep in Mesopotamia, holding up only 40,000 Turks, about 100,000† of our troops; they were too few for offensive, and too many for defensive operations; and we could not send any more; in fact we might have to withdraw

* General Monro left England on or about the 14th September.

† This was approximately the authorised strength of Force "D" when up to full establishment.

British troops in the spring. He, therefore, proposed a withdrawal on the Tigris to relieve the strain on the communications, to set free troops to deal with the Bakhtiaris and other tribes in South-West Persia, to counteract Turkish detachments moving south from Hamadan, to reduce the heavy sick rate and finally to perfect and consolidate our position with a view to moving north, east or west as the situation might require.

Strong objections were brought forward against the proposal and Sir William Robertson pointed out that he did not put an eventual advance to Baghdad out of the question. But the question for General Maude was whether he could retain the troops in fairly good healthy condition where they were or whether he should withdraw for the time being. General Maude himself did not agree with Sir William Robertson's proposal; if he could improve the communications he would go to Baghdad, but if he could not he would withdraw. The War Committee decided that a telegram to General Monro, asking for his opinion, should be drafted for their approval.

On the 19th September the Chief of the Imperial General Staff informed Sir Beauchamp Duff and General Maude that until General Monro had discussed the question with General Maude no instructions would be sent; that he was asking for a definite statement of the mission which His Majesty's Government expected the force to carry out; and that the whole question of dispositions was one mainly of communications, on which progress that summer had been very disappointing. On the 20th Sir Beauchamp Duff said that in accordance with orders from home Generals Skeen and Richardson, respectively Director of Military Operations and Deputy Adjutant-General at Army Headquarters in India, had sailed to meet General Monro at Aden with all necessary information. As a meeting between himself and General Monro could not be arranged, Sir Beauchamp Duff suggested that before any instructions were issued General Monro should discuss the question with General Kirkpatrick, the Chief of the General Staff in India, who was remaining in India in charge of Army Headquarters after General Duff's own departure about the 26th.

On the 27th September the Chief of the Imperial General Staff telegraphed to General Maude that the War Committee were considering the despatch of troops to avert a collapse on the part of the Sharif of Mecca which they were afraid might have a very serious effect in India and throughout the East. Sir William Robertson was opposed to the opening up of another

campaign, the developments of which it was not possible to foresee, and also for other reasons which would occur to General Maude. The War Committee wished General Maude to confer with Sir Percy Cox and report to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff what would be the effect on the military situation in Mesopotamia of the Sharif's collapse. General Maude replied next day (28th) saying that, in Sir Percy Cox's and his opinion, such a collapse would have no appreciable effect on the present military situation in Mesopotamia owing to the attitude of indifference of the local tribes ; though the Turks might exploit it politically to show Arab Shaikhs friendly to the British that the Sharif had been deserted. The operations in Mesopotamia would be favourably affected by a big and permanent success by the Sharif, but the local tribes were not likely to be disturbed by his failure.*

On the 30th September the Chief of the Imperial General Staff sent to General Maude a telegram, repeating it to the Commander-in-Chief in India, for communication to General Monro on his arrival.

> " Prior to your departure from England we discussed possible necessity of withdrawing troops to a position somewhat lower down the Tigris. This necessity seemed to exist for several reasons. The chief of these are (*a*) defective communications and slow improvement of them ; (*b*) inability usually alleged or implied by G.O.C. Force " D " to find detachments when occasionally and temporarily required for employment elsewhere. . . . . . ; (*c*) although it is realised the force is indirectly doing more to secure Persia than merely holding up some 20,000 Turks in the vicinity of Kut, we ought to derive greater value than we have hitherto from the large force employed. In other words, the force is sufficiently large to justify us in expecting it to carry out the following mission, which I am directed by the War Committee to communicate to you as being the instructions of His Majesty's Government, as decided on the 28th instant :—
>
> > ' The mission of the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force is to protect the oilfields and pipe lines in the vicinity of the Karun river, to maintain our occupation and control of the Basra *vilayet*, and to deny hostile access to the Persian Gulf and Southern Persia.

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* On the 17th October H.M. Government decided that as the whole policy of the Moslem world was opposed to sending British troops into the Hejaz, we could only help the Sharif with arms, stores and supplies.

No fresh advance to Baghdad can at present be contemplated, but it is the desire of H.M. Government, if and when possible, to establish British influence in the Baghdad *vilayet.* This further advance should not be undertaken unless and until sanction for it is given, but meanwhile the General Officer Commanding should continue to improve the river and railway communications and maintain as forward a position as the state of his communications will allow, and as can be made secure tactically without incurring heavy loss, whether caused by the enemy or by climatic conditions. Military and political considerations connected with Nasiriya, the Muntafik and Bani Lam tribes and the Pusht-i-Kuh—Bakhtiari country suggest retention of our present positions, if this can be achieved without undue sacrifices, but we desire your views as to the feasibility of this course. You will, no doubt, consult Sir Percy Cox as to the effect on the Arabs of any withdrawal. Further, the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force should ensure that hostile parties do not work down south across the line Shushtar–Isfahan. You must not expect to receive further reinforcements for the force. On the contrary, it may become necessary to withdraw the 13th Division, which was sent to the country in order to assist in the attempted relief of Kut.'

" H.M. Government, you will observe, wish the force to be kept as far forward as is feasible, and in this connection I wish you to understand that so far as I personally am concerned I leave the proposals as to the dispositions of the force entirely to your judgment. You will also observe that the responsibilities of the force extend to the Shushtar–Isfahan direction, but it is unlikely that this will make any material demand on the force. You should also consider necessity of relieving some of the white battalions by battalions from India. Regarding feasibility of eventtual advance in Baghdad direction, I have informed War Committee that in my opinion (*a*) we have not now, nor for an indefinite time are we likely to have, the number of troops required to seize and hold that place; (*b*) we cannot hope for a long time to come, owing to long and difficult communications, to maintain them there, even if we had them; (*c*) their position at Baghdad would, in other respects, be in a military sense unfavourable and

would have no decisive effect on the war. Keeping in mind necessity for being as strong as possible in decisive theatre, especially next spring, consider whole situation in all its aspects with Cox and Maude, and report your proposals, with special reference to any change in dispositions you deem necessary."

General Monro reached Basra on the 10th October. He had transhipped at Bombay, where General Kirkpatrick had put before him the views held by the authorities in India. On the 19th October he telegraphed his views at length to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, in reply to the latter's telegram of the 30th September. He found that the state of the communications made it possible, without imposing undue hardships on the troops, to maintain the force in its forward positions on the Tigris and Euphrates; and that improvement in every direction before the advent of the next hot weather season should put matters on such a basis that the maintenance problem should be no bar to the retention of these positions.

He considered the existing dispositions as the most suitable for dealing with the problem entrusted to Force "D." Our numerical superiority on the Tigris was a menace to the Turks there and to those opposite the Russians about Ruwandiz and Hamadan, where forces then seemed to be evenly balanced. If the Turks diverted troops to act against us on the Tigris, and accepting the improbability of their being able to maintain more than 60,000 about Kut, our force should be able to cope with the situation. If on the other hand, the Turks made an attempt to detach a force into Persia, while holding us on the Tigris, we could neutralise such a project by direct action in superior force.

General Monro had considered the alternative dispositions Sir William Robertson had discussed with Generals Duff and Maude, i.e., in the telegrams of and after the 12th September (already mentioned), but he did not think they would be advantageous. They would not command the rivers or the approaches to the oilfields as effectively as the positions actually being held, in which, moreover, the troops were in healthier surroundings than if they were brought nearer the coast. A withdrawal from the present positions would be detrimental to our interests and would effect no economy of force; as all the tribes would join against us in Mesopotamia and those in South Persia would be greatly unsettled and we should in consequence need greatly increased forces for protective duties along our communications and for the oilfields. Moreover,

tribesmen who had helped us would undoubtedly receive harsh treatment from the Turks and this would materially lower confidence in our prestige.

Sir Percy Cox did not attach much importance, said General Monro, to the problem of closing the line Shushtar–Isfahan, apart from the defence of the oilfields; but General Monro had advised General Maude to arrange for a sufficient force to give effect to the Government instructions if operations became necessary in that direction. General Monro concluded:

> "To sum up, I consider that our present position on the Tigris is the one best calculated to carry out the instructions of H.M. Government and to uphold our prestige. In sending you this reply I have earnestly weighed your directions in respect of exercising all economy of force in this theatre of war, and I hold the opinion that no economy would be effected by withdrawal at the present juncture."

Before leaving Mesopotamia for India, General Monro sent the Chief of the Imperial General Staff another telegram on the 26th October, in which he expressed the opinion that the force organisation was on a satisfactory basis and was being well administered; that General Maude had a very complete knowledge of all details and was competent; that all matters relating to the maintenance and comfort of the troops showed satisfactory progress; that the hospitals were liberally supplied and the health of the troops was improving; and that their *moral* was satisfactory. He then continued that, while he realised that visions of Baghdad were beyond our sphere and held out no special advantages, he advocated a move forward by Maude's left to the Hai, to deprive the Turks of supplies and very likely manœuvre them out of their positions on the right bank. Having settled the Hai, a move forward could be made, with very little risk, from Nasiriya to Samawa, whence greater control could be exercised over the tribesmen with probably advantageous results. General Maude, he said, fully realised that severe losses must not be incurred, but in General Monro's opinion the operations he outlined could be accomplished with insignificant losses.

On the 27th October Sir William Robertson agreed generally with these proposals, and he left it to General Maude to judge how far they were desirable. On the understanding that Force "D" could not be increased and that it was important to avoid losses without adequate return, it was most desirable that the influence exercised by the force in Mesopotamia should be proportionate to its size, once the state of communications permitted greater activity.

On the 13th November Sir William Robertson telegraphed to General Maude that an advance from Nasiriya to Samawa appeared to be risky whilst hostile Arabs still had control of the Hai; and before General Maude put his plans into execution the Chief of the Imperial General Staff would be glad to know his proposals for dealing with the situation on the Hai.

Replying on the 15th, General Maude said that he did not contemplate an advance to Samawa till the Hai situation was quite satisfactory. He proposed to conduct his operations in steps, with a careful review of the position after each step before the next move was made. His first step would be to get a firm footing on the Hai immediately to his front, which might even result in clearing the Turks from the right bank of the Tigris altogether; we should then be favourably situated to act against the Turkish communications and might compel the enemy to evacuate Sannaiyat. Such progress would have strong local effect on the Arabs; the Turks would no longer be able to get supplies by the Hai and we should separate Turks from Arabs there. Unless they intervened, it was his intention to leave the Arabs on the Hai alone; he did not anticipate any opposition from them; and thought it likely that a successful advance by us would incline them to join our side.

On the 24th November the Chief of the Imperial General Staff asked on what date General Maude intended to commence operations and was he in touch with General Baratoff or did he wish Sir William Robertson to communicate with the Russian Grand Duke Nicholas about co-operation by Baratoff?

On the 25th General Maude said that he would be glad if he could be allowed to decide later the date for commencement of his operations, as this would be governed by the date when his preparations were complete, and, as rain might be expected, by the weather; and the closest secrecy was essential to success.* He was in telegraphic touch with Baratoff, but was separated from him by such long distances of intricate country that co-operation between them could not be close and could only indirectly affect each other's operations. In these circumstances he suggested that without telling the Russians details as to his plans they might be sounded as to the possibility of co-operation by Baratoff, but should not be asked to take action till General Maude's movement had been launched.

In consequence, Sir William Robertson telegraphed on the 28th November to the British *liaison* officer with the Russian

* It is noteworthy that General Maude had not disclosed his plan and intentions to any of his own staff or to either of his corps commanders.

Caucasus Army, saying that preparations for offensive operations were being made in Mesopotamia, but that no date had yet been fixed for their commencement ; he asked for information regarding the Grand Duke's intentions, especially in regard to Baratoff's operations, in view of the above ; and he added that there was no desire that Baratoff should act till our movement had started. On the 2nd December the Chief of the Imperial General Staff heard in reply that the Russians intended no serious operations in the Caucasus till their communications had been improved, at any rate for the next month or two ; and that Baratoff had been sent instructions that if he received information of the British commencing really serious operations, he was to undertake operations necessary to prevent the Turks withdrawing any troops through Kermanshah to Baghdad, and so cause them to think that the Russians also were undertaking a serious advance.

On the 12th December General Maude telegraphed to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff and India that concentration on the Tigris front had been completed on the 11th, thus indicating that he was about to commence active operations.

In considering this policy discussion it is necessary to bear in mind the general situation in other theatres of war. By their winter campaign of 1915–16 the Central Powers had effected a considerable improvement in their position in the Near East. Bulgaria had come into the war on their side, the Serbian army had been practically effaced, pro-German elements in Greece had received encouragement in their hostile attitude to the Entente Powers' policy, direct communication with Turkey had been secured and Great Britain and France had diverted troops to Salonika.

The German forces, thanks to pre-war preparation, were still, taken as a whole, the most efficient of all the armies engaged ; and Germany, as the predominating partner, appeared to have complete control over the operations of her allies.* On the

* Marshal von Hindenburg, in " Out of My Life," describes how the German Military Mission to Turkey, with assistance from Germany in war material and the loan of a large number of officers, had succeeded not only in mobilising a large number of Turkish units but also in enabling Turkey to develop during 1916 powers of resistance which astonished everyone and which kept permanently away from the central European theatres more than 100,000 of the finest enemy troops. He also describes how Enver Pasha, in September 1916, justified to him the diversion of five or six Turkish divisions, placed at Germany's disposal, for use in Europe during 1916, owing to Enver's conviction that, although the further fighting probable in Armenia, Syria and Mesopotamia might be detrimental to Turkey, the war would be decided in Europe.

other hand, the Entente Powers were still without any such central directing authority and their different political aims led some of them to pursue divergent military purposes rather than to unite against the main Austro-German fronts, which the British General Staff held to be the point where alone success would have decisive effects. A few such instances relevant to this history at this stage may be cited. Russia's desire to gain possession of Constantinople had not only stood in the way of possible Greek co-operation in the Dardanelles, but had led Russia to expend efforts in the campaign against Turkey in Trans-Caucasia and Asia Minor which appeared to be excessive, especially having regard to Russia's great shortage of armaments and war material generally; as the great distances, indifferent communications and other natural difficulties involved in campaigning in these regions rendered success most uncertain, and even if achieved could have little decisive effect on the war as a whole. France and Russia were urging us, for what we regarded as inadequate military reasons, to undertake offensive operations from Salonika; and Italy, who had declared war on Austria-Hungary in May, 1915, refrained from declaring war on Germany also, until Rumania entered the war in August, 1916.

Rumania's intervention did not effect the improvement in favour of the Entente Powers in the situation in the Near East which had been anticipated. By the early summer of 1916 it appeared that Germany had so improved her communications eastward as to contemplate with equanimity any attacks by Russia and had decided that she and Austria were to concentrate their reserves for a great effort against the French at Verdun and the Italians in the Trentino. The Entente Powers countered these attacks by a Russian offensive against the Austrians in order to relieve Italy and by an Anglo-French offensive on the Somme to relieve Verdun. The Russians met with such success against the Austrians that Rumania practically decided in June to join in on the Entente side; but negotiations over the terms of her intervention dragged out till nearly the end of August, when Austria had recovered and Germany had had time to prepare for the contingency. Then, owing to faulty dispositions, deficient leadership and lack of cordial co-operation with Russia, Rumania encountered disaster. This was all the more unfortunate as it reacted on the internal situation in Russia, where pro-German influences were already producing a state of feeling regarding the war which caused her Allies grave anxiety; especially as Falkenhayn's replacement as Chief of

the General Staff of the German field armies by Hindenburg seemed to indicate Germany's intention to concentrate greater efforts against Russia in the near future.

Although in the late autumn of 1916 Germany was understood to be feeling severely the strain of her recent operations and her allies were said to be doing so to a still greater extent, the identical note delivered on the 12th December to the United States Ambassadors in their respective countries by Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey, saying that they were ready to negotiate for peace, was not taken by the Entente Powers as likely to lead to any definite results ;* and it was understood that the Central Powers were preparing for a maximum effort in 1917 with all their available resources.

At the beginning of June 1916 Great Britain had not yet completed fully the organisation and preparation of her resources, and her forces were still suffering from the deficiencies and disadvantages inherent in improvised armies. In the Somme battles, however, she achieved some success and at the beginning of August the general situation in all the theatres of war seemed to the British General Staff to be more favourable than at any previous stage of the war ; but Great Britain had incurred heavy casualties and by the autumn it was certain that she would have very great difficulty in finding sufficient men to keep up to establishment her various armies in the different theatres of war, i.e., France and Flanders, Salonika, Egypt, East Africa,† Aden and Mesopotamia‡ as well as the possibility that she might have to reinforce India. It is, therefore, not surprising that the Chief of the Imperial General Staff found it essential to endeavour to lessen, if possible, the requirements of forces acting in secondary theatres, where success could not exercise decisive effects on the war as a whole.

At the end of September H. M. Government decided, on the advice of the military authorities in India and London, that offensive operations from Aden should not be undertaken. Aden itself appeared to be in no danger, and no adequate return could be expected from extending our military commitments there.

* On the 1st January 1917, the Sultan of Turkey issued a notification to the Turkish Army informing them that though the Central Alliance had proposed a peace discussion to avoid bloodshed, they were confident of ultimate victory.

† General Smuts with a force of 50,000 men was engaged in an energetic attempt to obtain a decision here.

‡ By reason of the submarine danger it had by this time become advisable to send drafts to Mesopotamia via the Cape, and, owing to the longer time involved in the journey, their strength had to be increased by five per cent.

In India, during the hot weather and autumn of 1916, the troops on the North-West Frontier had been constantly employed in dealing with raids by the border tribes, those on the Derajat border having been almost incessant. In the autumn the Mohmand tribes adopted an actively hostile attitude, which necessitated a blockade along their border, carried out by means of a chain of block-houses, connected by a wire fence ; and on the 15th November a Mohmand *lashkar*,* some 6,000 strong, which had concentrated near Hafiz Kor, threatening the small Indian town Shabkadr, was attacked by a force consisting of two infantry brigades of the 1st Peshawar Division, with a proportion of divisional troops and detachments of Frontier Militia and Constabulary, and was successfully dispersed. In this action armoured cars and aeroplanes gave most useful assistance.

In November information was also received that, for some months past, German agents in Manila, Shanghai and Bangkok had been sending mountain guns, machine guns, rifles and ammunition from Japan to some place on the Siamese coast, whence they were to be smuggled into Burma and thence to create trouble in India. Fortunately the information was received in time and steps were taken to frustrate the plot.

Soon after General Monro reached India, the Army Council in London enquired whether India could not raise further units for service in secondary theatres of war such as Mesopotamia and Egypt, with a view to releasing British troops for the main theatre in France. It was felt in the United Kingdom that people in India did not realise the strain on British manpower that the war was exercising and how necessary it was to utilise the whole resources of the Empire.

There had been many difficulties in the way of expanding the Indian portion of the Army in India, as has been shown in the two preceding volumes of this narrative. But the main difficulties, namely shortage of trained British officers and of arms and equipment, were now being rectified by supply from the United Kingdom ; and one of General Monro's first steps after his arrival was to raise new battalions of Indian infantry.

As regards Arabia, at the beginning of December, Ibn Saud, Emir of Nejd, with whom during the year His Majesty's Government had contracted a treaty, visited Basra, where he impressed those British officers who met him with his integrity, ability and striking personality ; and he in his turn and his

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* Army

attendant Shaikhs seemed to have been greatly impressed by our military arrangements. Generally, the visit was most successful and confirmed Ibn Saud in his friendly attitude towards us.

On the Tigris, from September till the beginning of December operations by both sides were of a minor nature and consequently there is little to record concerning them. The Turks got into the habit during this period of issuing somewhat grandiloquent and exaggerated communiqués of what they had achieved; and it is on record that after one such occasion, when they laid claim to considerable successes, enquiry from General Maude elicited the fact that after bombarding our Sinn and Chahela areas for about two hours, in which they expended about 480 shells, they succeeded in wounding one man.

The British Air Force was very active and maintained its ascendancy over the enemy, carrying out many most successful bombing raids; and although the Turkish aeroplanes attempted retaliatory raids, their efforts were in reality half-hearted and generally ineffective. Bombing raids were not, however, the main work of the Royal Flying Corps. Reconnaissance, photography and co-operation with our artillery were all developed to a high degree of efficiency. Reconnaissance and photographic work were specially important, as accurate survey maps of the country bordering the Tigris beyond our front did not exist; and, to remedy this, large areas were photographed mile by mile and, from these photographs, maps were compiled.

In October two aeroplanes were sent to join the British force at Nasiriya, and in November carried out some successful and effective bombing raids against the ever-hostile Arab Shaikh Ajaimi.

At the beginning of September, various bands of Arabs began collecting on the left bank of the Euphrates in the vicinity of Nasiriya and started irregular hostilities of the usual character; and as the floods subsided General Brooking prepared for possible hostilities by reconnoitring the roads leading to the most probable centres of disaffection. His reconnaissance parties were not interfered with till the 9th September, when the inhabitants of As Sahilan, a collection of fortified homesteads 5½ miles north-east of Nasiriya, suddenly made a determined attack on a small mixed force, commanded by General Dunsford, which was covering a cavalry reconnaissance along a route north-east of Nasiriya. When the cavalry had completed their task, General Dunsford withdrew to Nasiriya

without difficulty and with few casualties. But his withdrawal was interpreted as an Arab victory and produced an immediate outburst of hostile activity in the surrounding districts. By the night of the 10th September, all the information received by the British indicated that a serious and widespread Arab rising against us had begun and was being fanned by the fanatical elements on the Hai.

General Brooking decided at once to assume the initiative before the hostile gatherings could assume undue proportions. He moved out early on the 11th with his whole available force, consisting of two troops of cavalry, four field and ten mountain guns, one and a half Sapper companies, four and a half infantry battalions and four machine gun sections.* Organising this force into two columns under the command of Generals Dunsford and Lucas (42nd Brigade) respectively, General Brooking despatched the right column under General Dunsford to destroy the fortifications and towers at As Sahilan. General Brooking foresaw that, while this column was so engaged, the Arabs would work round it to try and cut it off from Nasiriya, and he consequently held back the left column so that the Arabs working round the right column should expose themselves to attack by General Lucas, of whose advance, it was hoped, they would be in ignorance.

The plan met with entire success. The right column, in face of considerable opposition, carried out its task and commenced to withdraw again at 8 a.m. The retirement took some time, as the ambulance transport consisted mainly of slow-moving bullock tongas, and an increasing number of Arabs from all directions followed up the column for about two miles.

General Lucas with his column, advancing about four miles to the westward of As Sahilan, encountered the Arabs as had been anticipated and became heavily engaged with them as they endeavoured to outflank him and also at times to come to close quarters. After some three hours' fighting, by which time General Dunsford's force had almost reached Nasiriya, General Lucas was ordered to break off the engagement and withdraw. The Arabs made no attempt to follow up, and the retirement was carried out without special incident.

* His total rifle strength was, however, only 1,900. The force consisted of two troops 12th Cavalry ; B/222nd Battery, R.F.A. ; 21st (less one section) and 26th Mountain Batteries ; 4th Company Sappers and Miners and half the Malerkotla Sappers ; 1/5th Queens, 1/4th Dorsetshire, 90th Punjabis, 2/5th Gurkhas, and half the 43rd Erinpura Regiment, and two sections each of the 12th and 42nd Brigade Machine Gun Companies.

By noon all enemy activity had ceased and by 2 p.m. the whole force was back in Nasiriya, having suffered 196 casualties, but having, it was estimated, inflicted some six times that number of casualties on the Arabs, whose total strength was placed at about 5,000. In his report on this affair, which proved to have an excellent permanent effect on the local tribes, General Brooking paid tribute to the ability of Generals Dunsford and Lucas and to the steadiness and spirit of their troops. The combination between artillery and infantry was, he said, excellent and the results most convincing.

General Brooking's promptness and decision thus nipped in the bud one of the most determined attempts that the Arabs had hitherto made to assail our position.

It had transpired that the Turks were managing, through Arab agency, to obtain stores and supplies from districts in our occupation, generally via the Euphrates or the Hai; and it became necessary to prevent this by a blockade, which continued for many months and which was not easy to render entirely effective.

At the beginning of October, reports of the arrival at Samawa of a small Turkish mixed force seemed to indicate a possible Turkish movement down the Euphrates; but the force was reported to have withdrawn again soon afterwards and nothing more happened.

No operations took place on the Karun front during the period under review. But in view of his instructions to ensure that hostile parties did not penetrate south of the line Shushtar–Isfahan, General Maude increased slightly the staff and force in Arabistan; and on the 17th November a column of two squadrons cavalry and a half battalion infantry left Ahwaz for a circular tour via Dizful and Shushtar. After meeting with a cordial reception everywhere from the local inhabitants the column arrived back at Ahwaz on the 7th December.

The British estimates of the Turkish dispositions and strengths on the Tigris and in Persia show little variation between September and the beginning of December. The Turkish XVIII Corps—consisting of the 45th Division (3rd, 141st and 142nd Regiments), 51st Division (7th, 9th and 44th Regiments) and 52nd Division (37th, 40th and 43rd Regiments)—on the Tigris was estimated at the beginning of October at a strength of 700 cavalry, 16,300 rifles and 70 guns, and at the beginning of December at some 2,900 rifles more.* According to figures from Turkish sources, however, the strength of this corps was only about 10,500 rifles and 50 guns throughout this

* All nine infantry regiments were reported to consist of three battalions each.

period. The 37th and 44th Regiments had been sent off to the Sulaimaniya and Persian fronts ; but though they received some reports to that effect, the British in Mesopotamia did not feel satisfied that the reports were correct.* The Turkish XIII Corps on the Hamadan front, consisting of the 2nd Division 1st, 5th and 6th Regiments—twelve battalions) and the 6th Division (16th, 18th and a third regiment of uncertain title—nine battalions) was estimated at a strength of from 16,400 to 17,550 rifles, 1,700 sabres and about 50 guns. The garrison of Baghdad was placed at 4,000 to 5,000, though at the beginning of December reports from Russian sources said that the 3rd Turkish and another division were there ;† and on the Euphrates, scattered in detachments below Dair-az-Zor, there were reported to be about 350 sabres, 2,200 rifles and 8 guns. On the Ruwandiz front the Turks were known to have a force under Duke Albert of Mecklenburg, consisting of the 4th Turkish Division and some irregular divisions of tribesmen. The available Turkish accounts are not quite clear in regard to their dispositions, but it appears that the force under the Duke of Mecklenburg formed part of their Sixth Army‡ and had been entrusted with the defence of the Mosul frontier ; that the 4th Division was with him, and that in or about December the 14th Division was sent from the Caucasus to reinforce the Sixth Army. The 3rd Division does not appear to have been anywhere near Baghdad.

The Turkish force had made no serious attempt to advance from Hamadan towards Tehran, though small forces had been detached southwards from Hamadan and had produced some effect in Persia.§ On the 15th October, Prince Farman Farma, sent by the Persian Government to restore order in Fars, arrived at Shiraz, accompanied by Colonel Hugh Gough of the Indian Political Department, and here General Sykes with his small column also arrived from Isfahan on the 11th November ; with the result that by December the situation in South Persia was very satisfactory.

At the beginning of December, General Baratoff's total force was composed of 69 cavalry squadrons, 13 infantry battalions and 50 guns, with an approximate effective strength of 7,000

* All reports were very contradictory and confusing, and owing to a variety of reasons accurate intelligence was unusually difficult to obtain.

† General Maude came to the conclusion, however, that it was improbable that there was more than one division at Baghdad.

‡ This does not seem to have been realised by the British.

§ The *Vali* of Pusht-i-Kuh, who was pro-Turk though his followers were largely pro-British, was all this time " sitting on the fence."

sabres and 16,000 rifles. Of these, some 2,500 sabres and 10,000 rifles were in touch with the Turks in the vicinity of Hamadan.

The Turkish officer Muhammad Amin, who was on the General Staff of their Sixth Army, expresses the opinion in "Baghdad and the Story of its Last Fall" that the loss of Baghdad can be traced in the first place to the fact that Turkish Army Headquarters subordinated their military plans to those of the Germans. He considers that the German plans for attacking the Suez canal and for exploiting the situation in Persia and Afghanistan were directly responsible for the British advance into Palestine and for bringing the Russians within striking distance of Baghdad. He blames Turkish Headquarters for their ignorance of conditions in Mesopotamia and for trusting to a Moslem anti-British rising in Persia, Afghanistan and India, which led them to denude Mesopotamia of the troops required for its defence. He also blames them for their renewed advance into Persia after they had recaptured Kut, a project which he attributed to the extravagant dreams of Enver Pasha and others of the Pan-Turanian school. He considers that Halil Pasha, the Sixth Army commander, should have listened and paid more attention to the representations of Ali Ihsan Bey, commanding the XIII Army Corps, in regard to the dangers of reducing the force on the Tigris in order to advance into Persia; and that he made a further mistake in undertaking new responsibilities by starving operations under the Duke of Mecklenburg in the direction of Sulaimaniya and Ruwandiz.

Muhammad Amin says that Halil, unaware of,* or ignoring the British preparations during the seven months following the recapture of Kut, neglected to make adequate preparations to resist a renewed British offensive and refused the assistance asked for by Qasim Bey, commanding the XVIII Army Corps. Halil, he says, when asked by Turkish Headquarters† for his

* According to intelligence reports of the period, Turkish officers openly stated that several of them were able to visit the bazaars in the area we occupied, in Arab clothes, and that they possessed detailed knowledge of our troop movements.

† Hindenburg, in "Out of My Life," says that in September 1916, Enver Pasha told him that in some respects Turkey's position in Asia was very critical. They expected to be driven further back in Armenia, the renewal of fighting in Mesopotamia seemed probable, and Enver was convinced that the British would soon be in a position to attack them in superior force in Syria. In regard to this last point, the second Turkish attempt against the Suez Canal had been defeated in August 1916, and the Turks had retired to Gaza. The British occupied El Arish on the 21st December, and soon after completed the railway from the Suez canal to that point. They thus denied to the enemy the only route by which they could move forward a large force, and provided themselves with a suitable base for clearing the Sinai peninsula; for assisting the Sharif by threatening Turkish communications with Hejaz; and for initiating further operations against the Turks in Southern Syria.

views of the situation, telegraphed that the British force on the Tigris was inferior, demoralised and totally incapable of taking Kut, where the Turkish force was sufficient and was in no need of reinforcement from Persia. Halil added that he was contemplating a turning movement from the north against the British Tigris force and that his only need was money.

It appears, according to the same authority, that from sometime in the autumn of 1916 Halil was engaged in making arrangements to move a division, either the 4th or the 14th (which were both then on their way to reinforce the Sixth Army), from Kermanshah through Luristan to Jassan, and thence by a 35 mile march to surprise and fall on the British rear about Shaikh Saad or Ali Gharbi.* Muhammad Amin ridicules this plan, which meant a considerable movement through very difficult mountainous and desert country, but which, he says was only abandoned when the severe fighting on the Hai occurred.

It was known to General Maude that the Turks were having great difficulties with their long and imperfect line of communication. Lack of labour and material rendered the early completion of the Baghdad railway most improbable ; and, in spite of efforts by German officers, their land and river transport difficulties were still very great.

Marshal von Hindenburg in "Out of My Life" gives an interesting account of the German views regarding the situation in Asia at the end of 1916. He blames the Turks for their weak statesmanship, which, with interference by self-seeking politicians in military affairs† and the lack of vigour at the centre, contributed, in his opinion, to their defeats in 1917 ; and he says that Turkish victories in the Dardanelles and on the Tigris gave rise to grandiose ideas of the religious and political unification of all Islam which proved to be an illusion.

The Germans were anxious about the Caucasus situation but they expected that winter would stop extensive operations there. In Mesopotamia they did not think that the British had yet made sufficient progress with their communications to allow of their embarking on an offensive in revenge for the loss of Kut. But it would come ; and the Germans did not know if the Turks could offer a successful resistance. Although German Military Headquarters warned them that they should reinforce Mesopotamia, the Turkish General Staff were

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* The British do not appear to have believed that the Turks seriously contemplated such a movement, though a few reports were received that the Turks were improving the Badra–Mandali road.

† Meant to apply apparently to German politicians as well.

optimistic and allowed their political and Pan-Islamic ambitions to lead them into sending a whole army corps into Persia. At the same time Hindenburg admits that German dreams extending to Persia, Afghanistan, India and Egypt, in order to reach the spinal cord of the British world-power, led to many proposals for utilising stronger forces in these directions. But he says that they lacked the first elements—sufficient really effective lines of supply—required for the execution of such far-reaching plans.

Palestine gave the Germans cause for immediate anxiety, as a British attack there seemed to be imminent; and this appeared to be a more dangerous menace to the military and political stability of Turkey than an attack in Mesopotamia, which was so far away. In both Southern Syria and Mesopotamia, moreover, the Turks suffered from such extraordinary difficulties in their communications that a material increase of their forces beyond the existing strengths meant hunger and even thirst for everyone.

General Maude, in his despatch upon the operations of his force between the 28th August 1916 and the 31st March 1917, classifies the first three and a half months, i.e., up to the 12th December, as a period of preliminary preparation. He states that before active operations could be undertaken with reasonable prospect of success, it was necessary (*a*) to improve the health and training of the troops, who had suffered severely from the intense heat of the summer months, (*b*) to perfect our somewhat precarious lines of communication, (*c*) to develop our resources, and (*d*) to amass reserves of supplies, ammunition and stores at the front.

General Maude devoted his energy to these tasks and he summarises the result in the following terms:—

> "Steady progress was made on the lines so carefully designed and developed by my predecessor, Lieutenant-General Sir P. Lake, to whom my warm thanks are due for the firm foundations which had been laid for the ensuing winter campaign. The growth of Basra as a military port and base continued and the laying of railways was completed. The subsidence of the floods and the organisation of local and imported labour removed obstacles which had hitherto hindered development, although, conversely, the lack of water in the rivers and consequent groundings of river craft gave rise to anxiety from time to time. The directorate of Inland Water Transport was created and accessions of men and material arrived from overseas, as

well as additional river craft ; whilst the influx of adequate and experienced personnel for the directorates of Port Administration and Conservancy, Works, Railways, Supply and Transport, and Ordnance enabled these services to cope more adequately with their responsibilities in maintaining the field army. Hospital accommodation was reviewed and still further expanded, whilst the Remount and Veterinary services were overhauled and reconstituted. Changes were also made in the organisation of the army, the grouping of formations and units was readjusted, and alterations were made in the system of command. The Line of Communication defences were recast and additional Line of Communication units for administrative purposes were provided. Establishments for all units, whether on the various fronts or on the Line of Communication, were fixed, whilst the provision of mechanical transport and an increase of animals and vehicles enabled the land transport with the force to be reconstituted. . . . . . .

"By the end of November preliminary preparations were well advanced. A steady stream of reinforcements had been moving up the Tigris for some weeks, and drafts were joining their units, making good the wastage of the summer. The troops had shaken off the ill effects of the hot weather and their war training had improved. Stores, ammunition and supplies were accumulating rapidly at the front, our communications were assured, and it seemed clear that it was only a matter of days before offensive operations could be justifiably undertaken. Training camps which had been formed at Amara were broken up and the general concentration upstream of Shaikh Saad was completed."

To this summary we may add a little more detail.

Writing to General Cowans, Quartermaster-General in London, on the 10th September, General Maude said that the railway he was most anxious to get through was the line from Qurna to Amara and he hoped that with hard work it would be completed by the end of October. He also hoped to extend it from Amara to Shaikh Saad.* Writing about a month later to General Whigham he mentioned that railway progress on the Tigris had not been as quick as he had hoped for ; bridging difficulties delayed its construction ; and it was not completed till the 28th November. At the end of October, as a result of General Monro's

* This idea was subsequently abandoned. One of General Maude's reasons for advocating it was the report that the Turks were trying to divert the Tigris water into the Hai.

inspection, it was decided to convert this 2 ft. 6 in. line into metre-gauge as soon as material and labour were available.

The railway from Shaikh Saad reached Sinn on the 13th September and a fortnight later General Maude issued orders for it to be prolonged to Imam al Mansur, where it would still be out of range of the Turkish guns. This extension was completed by the 20th December.

At first General Maude hoped that the Nasiriya line would be completed in November, but its progress was delayed by lack of material and it was not finally completed and opened for traffic till the 29th December.

On the 7th September, Colonel Grey, with a considerably increased staff, took over control of the whole river transport service in Mesopotamia as Director of Inland Water Transport, under the orders of the Inspector-General of Communications.

From the beginning of September onwards a steady influx of river vessels, either complete or for re-erection at Basra, continued; and the river transport situation rapidly improved. During the week ending 18th November the amount of supplies and stores delivered at the Tigris riverhead by the flotilla reached a daily tonnage of 726, excluding supplies and stores delivered at Amara and other posts on the lines of communication; and during the next week a daily average of 1,500 tons of supplies and stores was despatched from Basra up the river.

At first the work of the directorate was somewhat hampered by shortage of personnel and labour; but this was soon remedied by the arrival of men from England, India, Egypt and China.*

In considering the amount of land transport required for the force, General Maude was faced with a somewhat difficult problem. The river transport, though a great asset, could not always be relied on; and it was not easy to strike a solution which would give sufficient transport at the front to meet reasonable anticipations and at the same time would not involve the presence of a large number of idle animals, which would consume supplies and so impair mobility. During his visit

* The rapid growth at this period is shown by the following figures :—

	Strength on 24.9.16.	*Strength on 9.12.16.*	
Army officers	32	117	
Royal Indian Marine officers	192	183	
British N.C.O's and men ..	212	923	
Indian ratings	6,735	12,673	(Includes a number of Chinese).
Egyptian Army officers and men	—	2,528	
	7,171	16,424	

General Monro went into the question with General Maude and reported to the War Office that sufficient transport should be allotted

(i) to admit of the force following up the Turks rapidly, should they withdraw ;
(ii) to allow of the despatch of columns from both the Tigris and Euphrates to check Turkish movements against the flanks ;
(iii) to give local columns the mobility necessary to overawe local tribes ; and
(iv) to flank the oilfields and the Shushtar–Isfahan road.

For these purposes, he recommended that, in addition to equipping the force with first and second line transport* and with supply columns for two cavalry brigades and five infantry divisions each carrying one day's supply, there should be sufficient transport to allow a column of two infantry brigades and a brigade of artillery to operate three days from the Tigris.

This proposal, which amounted to slightly less than General Maude had suggested, was approved by the War Office ; and steps were at once taken to provide the additional animal and mechanical transport required. When Lieutenant-Colonel F. W. Leland arrived on the 23rd September to take up the appointment of Assistant Director of Mechanical Transport, there were only two mechanical transport companies (Nos. 596 and 695) and No. 23 Motor Ambulance Convoy in the country. When the War Office approved the scale proposed by General Monro, General Maude applied for nine Ford van companies† in addition to other details ; and by the beginning of December two of these companies (Nos. 783 and 784 Mechanical Transport Companies) and No. 33 Motor Ambulance Convoy had arrived.

In addition, two caterpillar companies, of four tractors and two lorries each, (Nos. 788 and 789 Mechanical Transport Companies) for duty with the 157th Battery (four 60-pounders) and the 159th Siege Battery (four 6-inch howitzers) had also arrived.

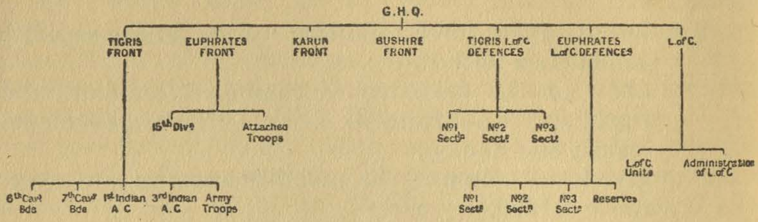
The result of General Maude's several changes in the general organisation of the forces under his command, which came into

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* Transport for the Regimental Reserve, Small Arm Ammunition, was included in First Line ; and the Second Line was calculated to carry one day's rations, one blanket and one waterproof sheet per man, cooking pots, officers' baggage (20 lbs. per man), and one day's forage for animals.

† Colonel Leland, in "With the M.T. in Mesopotamia," says that during the winter 1916–17 there were only about thirteen days on which the Ford vans were unable to work owing to the mud.

effect on the 15th November, is shown in the following diagram:



The formations and units on the different fronts with their distribution on the 19th November 1916 are shown in Appendix XXXIV. The Tigris Line of Communication had been extended as far as the line Wadi Camp–Twin Canals; and the defence of the railway from Shaikh Saad as far as Twin Canals had been taken over by the Tigris Line of Communication Defences.

Although the only addition to the larger formations of the Force since the surrender of Kut had been the 7th Cavalry Brigade, several additional units had arrived, as well as drafts to bring all units up to their authorised establishment; so that by the beginning of December the total combatant strength on the different fronts and lines of communication amounted to over 100,000.*

Among the artillery the 23rd and 30th Mountain Batteries had returned to India, to allow that country to send two other mountain batteries urgently required by General Smuts for service in East Africa; and the section 1/104th Battery, R.G.A., (two 4-inch guns of old pattern), had been broken up. On the other hand General Maude had received the 215th Brigade, R.F.A., (three 4-gun field batteries), the 159th Siege Battery, R.G.A., (to man the four old pattern 6-inch howitzers), the 524th Howitzer Battery, R.F.A., (four 4·5-inch howitzers), an Anglo-Indian battery to man post guns, and Nos. 80 and 92 Anti-Aircraft Sections.

The Engineers had been increased by the arrival from England of three (Northumbrian) field companies and the 15th Sapper and Miner Company from India.

Certain Indian cavalry regiments and infantry battalions had been relieved by similar units from India;† and three

* The *ration* strength of the force on 30th November, was 64,800 British, 156,350 Indian, and 74,420 animals.

† It had not been found possible to effect similar reliefs of any of the British infantry units.

additional Indian infantry battalions had arrived for garrison duties on the lines of communication.

Besides increases in numerical strength and artillery, the equipment of the force had received considerable accessions in machine guns and trench mortars. A machine gun company, with all-British personnel and armed with sixteen Vickers guns, formed part of each infantry brigade ; and each infantry battalion now had eight Lewis guns. The personnel of six trench mortar companies, each to be armed with four 2-inch trench mortars, had also arrived. The War Office had offered to send General Maude forty of these trench mortars if his communications would allow of his maintaining so many ; but General Maude had said that in view of his transport limitations and the contracted front on which they could be employed, he considered that twenty-four would be sufficient. Six Stokes mortar batteries had been formed, but the War Office had sent out sufficient mortars for fifteen batteries, i.e., one for each infantry brigade ; and General Maude was arranging to form this number.

There had been several changes in command and staff appointments since General Maude's assumption of command. Lieut.-General W. R. Marshall, commanding the 27th Division at Salonika, had been selected to command the new IIIrd Indian Army Corps and Major-General V. B. Fane had arrived from India to command the 7th Division. General Money, the Chief of the General Staff, returned from sick leave in India in October and resumed his appointment ; but the duties hitherto performed by General Cowper, the Deputy Adjutant- and Quartermaster-General were divided between two officers, Brigadier-General F. F. Ready and Brigadier-General H. O. Knox, who arrived from England in September to assume the duties of Deputy Adjutant-General and Deputy Quartermaster-General respectively. Among other officers from England who arrived at this period were Brigadier-General P. C. J. Scott as Director of Supply and Transport, Brigadier-General H. W. Perry as Director of Ordnance Stores, Brigadier-General G. L. Holdsworth as head of the Remount Department and Colonel G. Lubbock as Director of Railways. Many of the officers thus relieved were worn out by their past exertions and the climate, and had only remained in the country as long as they had because India had no one to replace them. From another point of view also the change was beneficial. General Maude found, soon after his arrival at Basra, that the administrative staff work was not being carried out on the most up-to-date lines ;

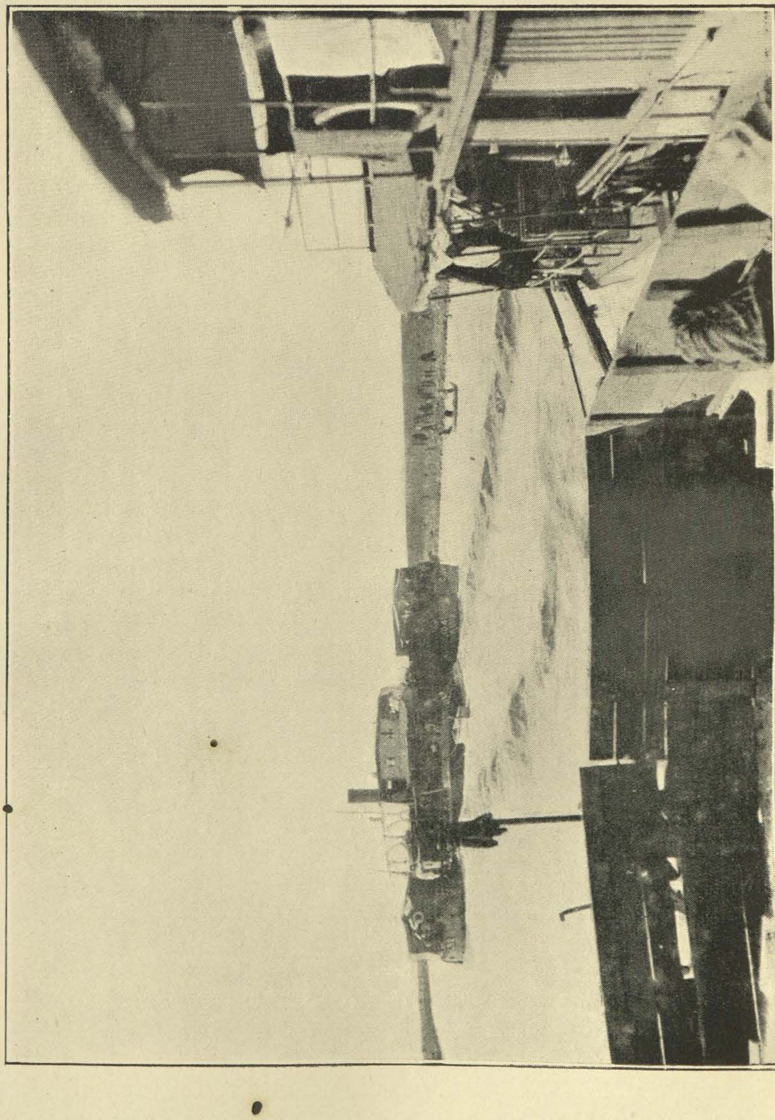
and consequently officers with recent experience of the staff methods in France were of great use to him in assisting to bring about the necessary changes in system.

General Maude found his time at Basra in September and October fully occupied in co-ordinating, systematising and accelerating work in the various departments and in trying to forecast his requirements for the future; and, owing to this and to General Monro's visit, he found himself obliged to retain his headquarters at Basra till the end of October, when it was moved up the Tigris and General Headquarters was established at Arab Village.

General Monro, accompanied by General Maude, went up the Tigris to the front and visited all the important posts *en route* and the forward positions on both banks of the river. He was struck by the magnitude of the necessary arrangements and found that the state of affairs generally was much better than he had been led to expect. General Maude, in a letter to General Whigham, mentioned the great improvement he himself saw in the healthier appearance of the troops, in their training and in their bearing generally. He attributed much of this to their amended conditions of life; and although, as he said, there was still much room for improvement in several directions, he was much pleased at the progress evident.

General Monro left Mesopotamia for India on the 26th October, and three days later General Maude paid a hurried visit up the Karun and to the oilfields, in order to acquaint himself with conditions there as far as was possible in the short time at his disposal. At the oilfields he met Dr. Young, an official of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company who had an unusually intimate knowledge of the local people and conditions. General Maude came to the conclusion that the Bakhtiaris, who were interested financially in the oilfields, were unlikely to turn against us and beyond faction fights among themselves would probably remain quiet unless the enemy reached Dizful, when they would require our assistance. To meet this contingency he made arrangements to strengthen the local defence of the oilfields with a number of machine guns manned by the Oil Company's European staff and a company of Indian infantry specially trained for the purpose; and also to send, if required, reinforcements of one and a half regiments of cavalry, a mountain battery and three infantry battalions. At the same time he realised that serious trouble in this area was very undesirable, as it would call for a much larger force and mean considerable dissemination over a very difficult country.

To face page 69.



River transport on the Tigris.

On the 31st October, the day after his return to Basra, he visited Nasiriya, going by train for the first ninety miles, as far as the railway had been completed, and motoring the rest of the distance. After two days' inspection at Nasiriya and other posts he returned to Basra, which he left on the night of the 2nd November and proceeded up the Tigris to Amara, *en route* to his new headquarters. He had been pleased with what he had seen up the Euphrates, where he considered that General Brooking had done well. The troops looked hard and fit, were well turned out, marched well and generally speaking looked full of confidence. During this visit he also decided to abandon the dredging of the steamer route through the Hammer lake to the Akaika channel and to concentrate instead on one farther south leading to the Mazliq channel.* This would, he considered, be an improvement both from a political and military point of view and would please the local inhabitants.

During November, General Maude's letters to General Whigham show a steady and satisfactory progress in every direction ;† and by the second week in December his preparations were complete. His units had reached the concentration area and were up to establishment ; depôts of reinforcements to replace casualties had been formed ; the men were healthy, well trained and full of confidence ; his river and land transport arrangements were at last working on an adequate scale ; and he had sufficient reserves of supplies and munitions at the front with an assured means of replenishing them. In fact, the result at which he had been aiming steadily for the last three and a half months had been attained. It was unfortunate that the completion of the preparations had been delayed till the beginning of the rainy season in mid-December as thus nearly three months of cool weather in the dry season had been lost. But General Maude had foreseen from the beginning that this would be the case ; and, realising that to go forward unprepared and piecemeal could only have disastrous results, he had decided, on taking over command, that the first thing he had to do was to place his communications on a sure and sound footing.

The first rain for many months fell on the 6th December and again on the 8th, converting the whole surface of the ground

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* See Volume I., Chapter XI., and Map 5.

† Lieutenant-Colonel Godfrey Collins, M.P., sent out to Mesopotamia by the Army Council to report on the working of the Quartermaster-General's services there, visited all the principal posts and camps in Mesopotamia in October–December 1916 ; and when leaving Basra he cabled to the War Office : " Whatever may have happened in the past, everything that human foresight, money and work could do was being done to-day for the welfare of the troops."

into a quagmire. But by the 9th the weather had cleared and the wind soon dried up the mud. Writing on the 11th to General Whigham, General Maude said that, weather permitting, he proposed in the next few days to secure a position on the Hai in his immediate front.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE BATTLE OF KUT AL AMARA, 1917.

COMMENCEMENT OF THE OFFENSIVE, 14TH DECEMBER, 1916–19TH JANUARY, 1917; ADVANCE TO THE HAI AND CAPTURE OF THE KHUDHAIRA BEND.

(MAP 22.)

AT the beginning of December, 1916, the Turks still held the positions on the Tigris which they had occupied during the hot weather; but they had elaborated and strengthened these considerably. On the left bank they had constructed, in rear of their Sannaiyat trenches, a series of positions extending to Kut, as well as entrenchments along the river bank to oppose any attempt at crossing. From a point three miles north-east of Kut their trenches on the right bank stretched across the re-entrant known as the Khudhaira bend;* and then lay along the left bank as far as the south of Kut, whence they continued on the right bank again to a point about two miles down the Hai before bending back in a north-westerly direction to rejoin the Tigris. In this southern or Hai salient, the Turks had a boat bridge across the Hai; and they maintained communication across the Tigris by a boat bridge on the east side of the Shumran peninsula and by ferries. The fronts of their Khudhaira and Hai salient trenches were well covered by enfilade fire from their left bank positions.

General Maude estimated that the Turkish strength on the Tigris amounted to about 20,000 rifles with 70 guns, of which some 2,500 rifles with 15 guns were believed to be on the right bank. It was also reported that the Turks were holding the line of the Hai for several miles south of Kala Haji Fahan with small posts and with mounted Arab auxiliaries. According to the Turkish General Staff, their total strength at this time on the Tigris was in reality only about 10,500 rifles with 50 guns.

The British trenches on the left bank of the Tigris were within one hundred and twenty yards of the Turkish front line at Sannaiyat; and on the right bank, the advanced British line, running generally along the Dujaila depression from Maqasis southwards, was about two miles distant from the Turkish advanced posts covering the Khudhaira bend.

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* Called by the Turks Imam Muhammad or Kirk Ghazileh.

To General Maude it appeared that his force was better situated strategically than that of the Turks, whose communications were in prolongation of their battle front. Consequently, if General Maude could establish himself on the Hai, he should be able to strike either at their communications or at the point of junction between their field units and their communications. His own communications, on the other hand, were exposed to no such danger. Their northern flank was covered to a great extent by marsh or waterless desert; and the dispositions of his force protected the southern flank against anything but a very wide turning movement, which water and supply difficulties alone would render very difficult.

The weather seemed likely to be the most troublesome factor in the problem facing General Maude; for the rainy season was about to commence. Rain, as he had good reason for knowing, would limit his radius of action by hampering or hindering the movement of his land transport, on which, so long as the Turks blocked the Tigris waterway, he was dependent for any attempt to strike at the enemy's communications. Moreover, the flanks and fronts of the Turkish positions were either covered by marsh or river, or could be inundated at will as soon as the rain caused the river to rise sufficiently.

The striking force at General Maude's disposal consisted of the 6th and 7th Cavalry Brigades and the Ist and IIIrd Corps; and this gave him an approximate total strength of 3,500 sabres, 45,000 rifles and 174 guns.* The Ist Corps (General Cobbe), composed of the 3rd and 7th Divisions, occupied the trenches facing Sannaiyat on the Tigris left bank and also, on the right bank, the area west of the line Arab Village—Twin Canals † as far as the Sinn Banks—Sinn Abtar—Dujaila Redoubt (exclusive). The 14th Division of the IIIrd Corps (General Marshall) occupied that corps' area west of Sinn Banks—Dujaila Redoubt (inclusive), including the advanced positions along the Dujaila depression; and by the 10th December the 13th Division, coming from Amara, had begun its concentration in the IIIrd Corps area. The 6th and 7th Cavalry Brigades at Arab Village had been temporarily organised as a division under the command of General Crocker, an arrangement which was sanctioned as a permanent measure before the end of the month.

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* Excluding anti-aircraft guns.

† The General Officer Commanding Tigris Defences was responsible for all east of this line.

One of the most important preparatory arrangements carried out during the past hot weather had been the re-organisation of the three bridging trains. Nos. 1 and 3 Bridging Trains took charge of the pontoon and boat bridges which were dependent for movement on river transport; while No. 2 Bridging Train was organised as a mobile unit and equipped with land transport. Superstructure and pontoons of English pattern were obtained from England; and Indian army transport carts were fitted specially with longer axles and longer poles to carry the pontoon sections. With two hundred such carts and with the superstructure, anchors and cables carried in fifty-six ordinary general service wagons, No. 2 Train eventually carried five hundred yards' length of bridge.

The light railway from Shaikh Saad, running via Twin Canals and Sinn, had been practically completed to Imam al Mansur;* and was protected against Arab raids throughout its southern flank by a chain of blockhouses and wire entanglement.

On the 10th December General Maude issued an operation order in which he announced his intention of pushing forward the left of his force to secure an entrenched position on the Hai.

From the 12th December the bulk of the "Army Troops" would come under the orders of the Ist and IIIrd Corps.†

The divisional supply columns of the Ist Corps, formed into special water and engineer stores convoys, were to move from Shaikh Saad on the 12th to Twin Canals and join the IIIrd Corps; and the pontoon bridge at Arab Village, where the boat bridge was to remain, was to be towed upstream to Fallahiya.

During the night 12th/13th, the IIIrd Corps (less the yeomanry squadron and the 13th Division artillery at Twin Canals) was to complete its concentration in its corps area.

During the 13th the artillery of both Corps was to bombard the enemy positions on the left bank of the Tigris for two spells of one hour each in the afternoon. The Ist Corps artillery was also to cut the wire in front of the Sannaiyat position

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* It was finally completed on the 20th December.

† *Under the Ist Corps*...134th (Howitzer) Brigade, R.F.A. (but to be transferred to IIIrd Corps after dark on the 13th), one section No. 74 Heavy Artillery Group (60-pounders), 159th Siege Battery and six Stokes mortar batteries.

Under the IIIrd Corps...No. 74 Heavy Artillery Group (less one section), No. 59 Anti-aircraft Section, No. 2 Mobile Bridging Train (1st King George's Own Sappers and Miners) and 64th Pioneers.

during the day; and the Ist Corps was to act generally so as to create the impression that an attack on Sannaiyat was intended. The Air Force, in addition to observing for the artillery bombardment, was to reconnoitre for any hostile reinforcements within thirty miles of Kut and to prevent any close Turkish air reconnaissance of our positions.

During the night 13th/14th the Cavalry Division was to move from Arab Village to bivouac south of Sinn Abtar; and the yeomanry and artillery of the 13th Division at Twin Canals were to concentrate forward in readiness for the next day's operations.

On the 14th December; (*a*) the Cavalry Division, moving east of Dujaila Redoubt and thence south-south-west, was to secure the passage of the Hai at Basrugiya by daybreak;* and was then to operate rapidly towards the Shumran bridge, clearing the enemy from the right (or western) bank of the Hai south of Kala Haji Fahan.

(*b*) The Air Force were to carry out a raid before daybreak to destroy the Shumran bridge. After daybreak they were to keep the Army, Cavalry and Corps commanders informed as to enemy movements, including any Arab gathering to the west or south of the IIIrd Corps position; to acquaint the IIIrd Corps artillery with the progress of its infantry and of the cavalry; to observe for the artillery of both corps; and to bomb any suitable targets, especially enemy troops attempting to cross the Tigris about Shumran and Kut.

(*c*) The Ist Corps was to bombard the enemy positions on the left bank from 3.30 to 3.40 a.m. and from 6 to 6.30 a.m.; to continue to create the impression that an assault on Sannaiyat was intended; and to be prepared to assault and capture the foremost trenches of the Sannaiyat position, should circumstances render this desirable, on receipt of orders from General Headquarters.

(*d*) The IIIrd Corps was to secure as early as possible and entrench a line from Calf's Head on the Dujaila depression to S.7 on the Hai and thence on the south of that river to A.A.5, north-west of Basrugiya; and in the last sector the Hai was to be bridged. To deal with any possible Arab attacks against its flank and rear, the Corps was also to hold the former Turkish trench line from the Dujaila Redoubt to A.A.5.

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* Sunrise was about 6.50 a.m.

Meanwhile the remainder of the IIIrd Corps, pivoting on its right, was to operate north-west rapidly, to clear the left bank of the Hai, south of Kala Haji Fahan, of hostile troops, thus affording security for the working parties entrenching the line above-mentioned. The IIIrd Corps was to be prepared throughout the day to take advantage of any weakening by the enemy in its front which would enable us to clear the right bank of the Tigris entirely of hostile forces.

(*e*) The commander of the Ist Corps was to detail an infantry brigade to be by 6 a.m. at Sinn Abtar, where it would be under the direct orders of the Army commander.

Arrangements had been made with the Senior Naval Officer for the guns of the gunboat flotilla, with the Kite Balloon section observing for them, to co-operate with the Ist Corps artillery on the 13th and 14th December.

All tents were to remain standing, but might be struck after dusk on the 13th at the discretion of Corps and Cavalry commanders.

After giving instructions for medical arrangements and the disposal of prisoners, the operation order concluded by saying that Advanced General Headquarters would be located close to the south of Sinn Abtar * from 5 p.m. on the 13th and that the General Headquarters report centre would be established at the Dujaila Redoubt between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. on the 14th.

Fine weather continuing, preparations for the above operations were successfully completed during the next three days. On the 13th an effective bombardment of the Turkish left bank positions was carried out ; the wire in front of Sannaiyat was cut ; and the Ist Corps demonstrated along the right bank of the Tigris as if meditating a crossing in one or two places.

At midnight 13th/14th December, the British force was disposed as follows :—

Ist Corps.—The three infantry brigades of the 7th Division were on the left bank of the Tigris ; the 21st being in the front line opposite Sannaiyat, with the 19th in rear and the 28th near Arab Village. The 3rd Division was on the right bank ; the 7th Brigade holding the river bank from opposite Sannaiyat to the mouth of the Nasifiya canal ; the 9th Brigade north of Twin Canals ; the 8th Brigade about to move from near The Triangle to Sinn

* The IIIrd Corps moved its Advanced Headquarters from here to Imam al Mansur on the afternoon of the 13th.

Abtar to form Army Reserve; and detachments from the division garrisoned the blockhouses guarding the railway, Twin Canals—Sinn Abtar. The number of guns with the Ist Corps totalled 78.*

IIIrd Corps.—The 35th Brigade of the 14th Division held the right bank from the Nasifiya mouth to that of the Dujaila depression and thence along the depression to near Calf's Head; the 37th Brigade (less two battalions in divisional reserve), with the 128th Pioneers attached, was moving forward to take up a line from the left of the 35th Brigade as far as R.8; and the 36th Brigade was proceeding to occupy the trench line from Dujaila Redoubt to A.A.5. The 13th Division was concentrated in the vicinity of Imam al Mansur. The number of guns with the IIIrd Corps totalled 84.†

The Cavalry Division was concentrated south of Sinn Abtar.

The advance to and across the Hai‡ was carried out without opposition during the early hours of the 14th December, Basrugiya being reached by the cavalry by 6 a.m. and Atab by the 40th Infantry Brigade of the 13th Division about 5.45 a.m. By 7.30 a.m. the line Calf's Head—S.7 had been occupied; on the right by the 37th Brigade and on the left by the 38th Brigade. South of the Hai, where No. 2 Bridging Train had begun the construction of two bridges at Atab, the 40th Brigade was entrenching the line S.7—A.A.5. The 36th Brigade held the trenches Dujaila Redoubt—A.A.5, with the IIIrd Corps cavalry (two squadrons 32nd Lancers) in observation about three miles to the south; and the 64th Pioneers had started to improve the track from Imam al Mansur to Atab.

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* 3rd Division artillery: 4th Brigade, R.F.A. (18 guns); B/69th Howitzer Battery (4 howitzers); 215th Brigade, R.F.A. (12 guns). Total 34.

7th Division artillery: 9th Brigade, R.F.A. (18 guns); 56th Brigade, R.F.A. (16 guns); D/69th Howitzer Battery (4 howitzers). Total 38.

Corps Artillery: One section 2/86th Battery (two 60-pounder guns); 159th Siege Battery (four 6-inch howitzers). Total 6.

† 13th Division artillery: 55th Brigade, R.F.A. (less one battery) (12 guns); 66th Brigade, R.F.A. (16 guns); A/69th Howitzer Battery (4 howitzers); 72nd Battery, R.G.A. (4 howitzers). Total 36.

14th Division artillery: 13th Brigade, R.F.A. (18 guns); C/69th Howitzer Battery (4 howitzers); B/55th Battery, R.F.A. (from 13th Division) (4 guns); 1 section 2/86th Battery (from Army Troops) (two 60-pounder guns). Total 28.

Corps Artillery: 74th Heavy Artillery Group (less 2/86th Battery) (eight 60-pounder guns); 134th Howitzer Brigade (12 howitzers). Total 20.

‡ The Hai, bordered by low scrub, was not easily discernible from any distance. It was found to be fordable in numerous places.

After watering its horses, the Cavalry Division started to advance up the right (western) bank of the Hai at 7.15 a.m. About half an hour later, the 39th Infantry Brigade (hitherto 13th Divisional Reserve), with the 55th Brigade, R.F.A., supporting it and the 13th Divisional Cavalry Squadron maintaining touch on its left flank with the Cavalry Division across the Hai, began to advance up the left bank of that river. Meeting with no opposition, it had established itself by 3 p.m. on a line running for one and a half miles north-eastward from Umm as Saad ford.

During the morning, patrols from the 35th and 37th Infantry Brigades ascertained that the Turks were holding the trenches across the Khudhaira bend and those covering their Hai bridge, i.e., from N.14 towards Kala Haji Fahan.

In the meantime the Cavalry Division, opposed only by some fifty Turkish cavalry, had reached Besouia about 10 a.m. and Kala Haji Fahan by 12.40 p.m. From here the 6th Cavalry Brigade continued to advance towards the Shumran bridge (which the bombs dropped by the Air Force between 5.30 and 6 a.m. had failed to hit) and, when about three miles west of Kut, came under shell fire from Kut and from a Turkish gunboat. A squadron of the 14th Hussars pushed on towards the bridge, but was checked by infantry fire about half a mile short of it. In the evening the Cavalry Division withdrew to bivouac at Atab, where two bridges across the Hai had been completed earlier in the day.

At 4.10 p.m. General Maude issued orders that the IIIrd Corps was to hold, for the night, the positions it had occupied at 7.30 a.m., except that the 39th Infantry Brigade was to maintain its advanced position at Umm as Saad.

During the day the Ist Corps had continued to bombard, and demonstrate against, the Sannaiyat position.

At 10.30 p.m. General Maude, issuing orders for the Air Force to reconnoitre next morning at daybreak and ascertain the enemy's dispositions, instructed the Cavalry Division and the IIIrd Corps to be ready to advance at any time after 9 a.m.

During the ensuing night a British aeroplane, on a moonlight reconnaissance, observed that the Turkish Shumran bridge had been dismantled and was being towed in sections upstream by a steamer. The pilot at once dropped all his bombs on this target, and, returning to Arab Village for more, continued the bombardment till morning, with the result that the steamer repeatedly slipped its tow of boats, which drifted away on to the

river banks. When morning broke the Turks consequently found themselves without bridge communication across the Tigris; and this they were unable to restore till the 17th, when they completed the construction of a bridge on the west of the Shumran peninsula.

Air reconnaissances carried out at daybreak on the 15th December observed little enemy movement, but hostile troops in some strength were reported south of the Shumran bend facing east. At 7.45 a.m. General Maude ordered the following operations to commence at 9 a.m. The IIIrd Corps was to advance and occupy the line Pentagon (on the Dujaila depression)—P.17 (on the Hai) and was to push forward strong patrols all along its line to ascertain to what extent the Turkish trenches opposite it were occupied. The Cavalry Division, advancing to Kala Haji Fahan, was to obtain similar information in regard to the enemy trenches forming the western face of his Hai salient; and was also to despatch strong patrols to reconnoitre towards the Shumran bend. The Ist Corps was to carry out a slow and systematic bombardment of the Sannaiyat position; and in this the naval flotilla was asked to co-operate.

By 1 p.m., the IIIrd Corps, meeting with only slight opposition, had occupied the alignment indicated and then sent out strong patrols to test the Turkish strength to its front. By this time General Maude had received reports from his Air Force that there were but few enemy troops on the right bank of the Tigris; and at 1 p.m. he instructed the IIIrd Corps to push forward rapidly and secure a line still farther forward. Later, however, General Marshall was told not to run any risk of incurring heavy casualties.

The strong patrols from the 13th and 14th Divisions, their progress checked by considerable gun and rifle fire, soon ascertained that the Turks were holding their trenches across the Khudhaira bend and in front of the Hai bridge in strength; but by dusk the IIIrd Corps had occupied a new line Maqasis—K.4—M.3—N.7—P.6—Pointed Ruin—Umm as Saad ford, the junction of the 13th and 14th Divisions being at the track about five hundred yards east of P.6; while the 13th Division still held the left bank of the Hai to S.7 and the Atab bridgehead south of the Hai; * and the 36th Brigade still held the old Turkish Dujaila—Hai trenches.

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* Some three hundred mounted Arabs from the southward had advanced during the morning against this bridgehead but had been driven off.

The cavalry, having ascertained during the day that the Turks held the western face of the Hai salient in considerable strength, returned at dusk to bivouac near the Umm as Saad ford.

The total British casualties during the 14th and 15th December amounted to 398; and of these, 369 had been incurred by the IIIrd Corps on the 15th, the 39th Brigade with 206 casualties having been the heaviest sufferers.

On the 16th December General Maude further extended his footing on the Hai. The Ist Corps, to which the 8th Infantry Brigade now reverted from Army Reserve, took over from the IIIrd Corps the line Maqasis—Pentagon; and the IIIrd Corps, crossing the Hai, occupied the line Kala Haji Fahan—R.21—S.16—Old Encampment—Atab bridgehead (inclusive). The Cavalry Division reconnoitred to the west of the Shumran bend; and the artillery of the Ist and IIIrd Corps bombarded Sannaiyat and the Kut and Hai salient areas, apparently with considerable effect. The total British casualties for the day were 68, of which the 39th Infantry Brigade again contributed the greater part, i.e., 54.

After dark on the 16th, small reconnoitring patrols of the 2/7th Gurkhas and 91st Punjabis (7th Infantry Brigade) carried out a gallant exploit, swimming across the Tigris on empty oil tins to ascertain if the Turks still occupied their piquets on the opposite bank between Sannaiyat and Maqasis. Of the seven men engaged only four returned, after about two hours in the water, utterly exhausted from the cold and for some time speechless. Two of the missing men had been drowned and the third probably captured, but the survivors * brought back information that the Turkish piquets were still in position.

On the 16th December the Chief of the Imperial General Staff telegraphed expressing his pleasure at the success gained with such low casualties and asking General Maude's further intentions. It seemed to Sir William Robertson that without going beyond the scope of his instructions, which forbad operations involving loss without adequate return, General Maude might now, by cutting or threatening the enemy communications, cause the Turks to evacuate Sannaiyat and even Kut. General Maude replied on the 17th that, broadly speaking, his plan was to contain the enemy at Kut and eastward thereof with the Ist and part of the IIIrd Corps, while he

* They were awarded the Indian Distinguished Service Medal.

manœuvred westward with the Cavalry Division and the remainder of the IIIrd Corps so as to strike at the enemy's communications. If the fine weather continued and the enemy were not heavily reinforced, the prospects of success were favourable; but he was preparing a position on the Hai, to which he could fall back in case of necessity and still maintain his hold on that river. So far there was no news of hostile reinforcements and the weather was fine.

Air reconnaissances at daybreak on the 17th December disclosed no important enemy movements. The Turks still held in some strength their Khudhaira and Hai salient trenches and there was about a battalion entrenched south of the centre of the Shumran bend; but otherwise the Tigris right bank appeared to be clear of enemy troops. At 11 a.m. General Maude issued an order, giving his intention as he had described it to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff. The Ist Corps was to take over from the IIIrd Corps the line from Pentagon to a point about a mile north-east of P.6 and would also furnish a detachment to hold the Dujaila Redoubt against possible Arab attacks, while the IIIrd Corps was to extend farther westward and occupy the line Kala Haji Fahan—P.27—Q.28—A.A.43—S.16—Atab Bridgehead—No. 4 Redoubt—Imam al Mansur. Most of these movements took place after dark and were completed before daybreak on the 18th.

On the 17th December the cavalry had a day of rest; the Turkish Sannaiyat, Kut and Hai salient areas were all bombarded; the Mobile Bridging Train constructed two bridges across the Hai one mile east of Besouia; the 64th Pioneers reverted from attachment to the IIIrd Corps to Army Troops; and the General Officer Commanding Tigris Defences took over the defence of the railway as far as Imam al Mansur (exclusive). The Turks were mainly occupied, apparently, in strengthening their entrenchments and in completing the construction of their boat bridge on the western side of the Shumran peninsula.

At 7.30 p.m. General Maude issued orders for the Cavalry Division to move out at 8 a.m. next morning and shell, with aeroplane co-operation, the Shumran bridge, withdrawing again, after it had been effectively bombarded, to Besouia. During the night 17th/18th aeroplanes bombarded Turkish river craft westward of Kut with some effect.

At 8 a.m. on the 18th December General Maude informed General Crocker, commanding the Cavalry Division, that a Turkish detachment was reported in a position southward of

the Shumran bend, and instructed him, in addition to shelling the Shumran bridge, to detail some horse artillery guns to shell this position at a stated hour, when howitzers of the IIIrd Corps would co-operate and a small force of infantry with machine guns from the IIIrd Corps would demonstrate against it. Apparently, however, the distance to be traversed, or the difficulties involved in the advance, had been under-estimated, as it was not until 2 p.m. that the horse artillery guns of the 7th Cavalry Brigade came into action against the bridge and an adjacent steamer; and about half an hour later they had to commence their return to Besouia. In the meantime, the 6th Cavalry Brigade had experienced difficulty in locating the Turkish position southward of the Shumran bend, which it shelled and attacked dismounted after one of its advanced squadrons had suffered several casualties from Turkish rifle and machine gun fire. The two infantry battalions and machine gun company of the IIIrd Corps,* moving out to demonstrate against this position, did not arrive within striking distance of it before it was time for them to withdraw; and at 2.45 p.m. the 6th Cavalry Brigade also withdrew, coming under some Turkish gunfire from the left bank. General Maude in his telegram that evening reporting progress said that the Turks were driven from their trenches on the right bank; but there is nothing to confirm this statement in the cavalry war diaries and, as our force did not remain in occupation of them, the evacuation of the trenches may only have been temporary.

The bulk of the IIIrd Corps were occupied during the day in consolidating their new line; the bombardment of the Turkish positions at Sannaiyat, Kut and the Hai salient continued; and the Mobile Bridging Train constructed two more bridges across the Hai south of Kala Haji Fahan at R.17. This made six bridges altogether across the Hai, whose one hundred and fifty yard wide river-bed, although it then consisted of a succession of pools connected by a mere trickle of water, was full of deep sand and in places quicksands; and these rendered the construction of bridges most desirable.

His advance having secured to his force positions within, as he said, seven miles of the enemy's communications west of Kut, General Maude deemed the time favourable for an operation to cut these communications; and on the 19th December he made a further redistribution of his troops to

* 1/5th Buffs, 2/4th Gurkhas and No. 185 Machine Gun Company under Brigadier-General Thomson (35th Brigade).

that end. During the morning a heavy bombardment of the Turkish Khudhaira and Hai salient trenches was carried out; during the day the Ist Corps executed a feint attack against Sannaiyat to lead the enemy to believe that an attack on his left through the Suwaikiya marsh was imminent; the Tigris Defences took over Imam al Mansur and the old Turkish Dujaila—Hai trench line; and by midnight the positions of the IIIrd Corps had been readjusted as follows. Two brigades of the 13th Division were astride the Hai facing north, the 38th being on the eastern and the 39th on the western side; the 36th Brigade of the 14th Division held the line, facing west and south from the left of the 39th Brigade to the Atab bridgehead inclusive; and the following troops of the 13th and 14th Divisions with the Mobile Bridging Train * and a half-squadron 32nd Lancers were concentrated two miles west of Besouia (S.18):—

2nd, 44th, B/55th, 60th and C/69th Batteries, R.F.A.
One section, 88th Field Company, R.E.
35th, 37th and 40th Infantry Brigades.

The Cavalry Division was at Besouia.

By utilising all the second line transport of the Ist and IIIrd Corps sufficient was obtained to provide the striking force with six days' supplies.

General Maude's plan was as follows. Early on the 20th December, General Crocker, with the 7th Cavalry Brigade, 40th Infantry Brigade, B/55th Field Battery, a section 88th Field Company and the Bridging Train, was to move out from S.18 at first due west for about eight miles and then a little west of north for another six miles to "Brick Kilns" at the southern end of the Husaini bend. Here a crossing was to be secured rapidly, a covering force being thrown out on the Tigris left bank to cover the bridge construction and cavalry and guns pushed out quickly on both flanks to secure covering positions on the right bank. Bridgeheads on both banks and an east and west line, some three miles north of the bridge, across the peninsula formed by the loop of the Tigris, were to be entrenched and occupied as soon as possible. Ammunition, pontoons, supplies and stores were to be unloaded and stacked at Brick Kilns and all but first line transport was to return to Besouia without delay.

At 7 a.m. General Thomson, with the 6th Cavalry Brigade, 35th Infantry Brigade and 60th and C/69th Field Howitzer

* Carrying three hundred yards of bridge. To provide this three of the bridges over the Hai had been dismantled.

Batteries, was to move out from S.18 and shell the enemy's Shumran bridge and adjacent shipping and also cover the withdrawal from Brick Kilns of General Crocker's second line transport, which he was then to convoy back to our lines west of the Hai in the evening.

In reserve, in readiness to move out at short notice in support of General Thomson's column, there were to remain at S.18 under General Egerton the half-squadron 32nd Lancers, 2nd and 44th Field Batteries and 37th Infantry Brigade.

Starting at 5 a.m. on the 20th December, General Crocker's column, after marching about twelve miles, reached the Husainiya canal about two miles south of Brick Kilns. About half an hour before this the 13th Lancers in advanced guard had been fired on by hostile guns from a position on the Tigris left bank about half a mile north of the Husainiya canal, and "V" Battery, R.H.A., had returned the fire with such effect that the enemy guns remained silent throughout the rest of the day. It was evident, however, that the Turks had not been taken by surprise.

From the position reached on the Husainiya canal, portions of the 7th Cavalry Brigade were sent forward to take up covering positions on the right bank of the river above and below the Brick Kilns; the 13th Lancers with two horse artillery guns of "V" Battery to secure a position north-north-east of the Kilns and the 14th Lancers with the four remaining guns to secure a position north-north-west of the Kilns. The 8th Cheshire Regiment, followed by the 8th Royal Welch Fusiliers, moved northward along the bed of the canal to take up positions along the river bank, immediately east and west of the Kilns respectively; and both General Lewin, commanding the 40th Infantry Brigade, and Captain Witts, commanding the bridging train, followed along the canal to make a personal reconnaissance.

The Tigris here was some three hundred yards wide and the ground on both banks was quite flat and devoid of cover, except for the usual low embankments along the river edge. But the dry bed of the Husainiya canal, wide and deep, afforded complete cover from view and useful cover against fire to within fifty yards of the river, where it was closed by a large dam fifteen feet high, from the summit of which there was at that time a sheer drop of about six feet to the water in the river. The enemy was found to be occupying trenches on the northern bank of the river, his strength being estimated during the subsequent operations at 350 infantry with four field guns and two machine guns.

The Cheshires and Welch Fusiliers took up their positions along the river bank; and about 1 p.m. General Crocker arrived at the dam and, having seen the situation, decided that a crossing should be attempted. He was in wireless communication with General Headquarters and about this time received a telegram from General Maude saying that if he found difficulty in establishing himself on the river line he should use his discretion in ordering his column back to Besouia. The telegram further informed him of the positions of General Thomson's force at 11.25 a.m. and stated that the reserve column under General Egerton was moving out to an old camp site five and three-quarter miles due west of Umm as Saad ford. It is not clear from the records whether General Crocker received this message before or after he had come to the decision to attempt a crossing.

The Bridging Train had followed the infantry along the canal bed and a very gallant attempt was now made to effect a crossing by carrying a pontoon over the dam and launching it in the river. Assisted by volunteers (nineteen sappers of the Bridging Train and an officer and ten men of the 4th South Wales Borderers) Captain Witts succeeded in the first part of his difficult task. But before the pontoon could get away from the bank, Captain Witts, four sappers and six of the Borderers were hit; and orders were given for this attempt to be abandoned.

It was, however, decided to make another attempt about a mile upstream of the Brick Kilns. But, while preparations for this were still in progress, General Crocker received a further message, sent by General Maude at 1.17 p.m., saying:—

> "You should withdraw your column to Besouia unless you have established yourself on river by the time you receive this wire."

At 2.15 p.m. General Crocker decided to discontinue the attempt at crossing and to withdraw his column.

The concentration of the column took some time and the withdrawal made little progress till 5 p.m., after which the column marched six miles in a south-easterly direction and bivouacked for the night in the desert. Men and animals were all much tired and the majority of the animals, which had not been watered that day, did not get any water till next day. The total casualties in the column amounted to 54.*

* An article in the Journal of the Royal United Service Institution for August 1923 by Major Witts gives a detailed description of this operation.

General Thomson's column had, meanwhile, proceeded to carry out its allotted rôle, gaining touch with Turkish detachments on the right bank south of the Shumran bend and bombarding successfully the enemy's camps and shipping in the bend, as well as shelling the bridge. Hearing at 4 p.m. that General Crocker was withdrawing, General Thomson retired soon afterwards, in consequence of orders received, to his previous night's bivouac, which the last of his units did not reach till 10.45 p.m.

In accordance with orders, General Egerton moved westward with his reserve column at about 1.15 p.m.; and two and a half hours later he received instructions to assist General Crocker's withdrawal to Besouia. At the same time both General Crocker's and General Thomson's columns were placed under his orders and he was warned that, having regard to the large amount of transport with it, the southern flank of General Crocker's column was exposed to possible Arab attack. Not long after this General Egerton heard from General Crocker that, owing to the fatigue of his infantry and transport, he would be obliged to bivouac in the desert. Thereupon, sending back his two field batteries to their previous night's bivouac, General Egerton started himself with the 37th Infantry Brigade to join General Crocker. After marching till 8 p.m., however, he failed to reach the bivouac and halted, sending out a patrol under a staff officer to communicate with General Crocker. The staff officer returned at 2 a.m. with the information that General Crocker was not in need of assistance; and in consequence the 37th Brigade remained where it was for the night, returning to the Hai next morning with General Crocker's column.

General Maude's reasons for the dispositions he made for the attempted crossing of the 20th December are not clear, nor is it known what intentions he may have had for the further development of the operations following a successful crossing. In his official progress report and in his private letters he says that his instructions from the Chief of the Imperial General Staff did not justify the losses which, in view of the opposition disclosed, a crossing would probably have involved.

General Maude's main object was probably to cause the Turks either to evacuate Sannaiyat—and possibly Kut—in order to contract their extended front, or to disperse their strength further along this front. Apart from other advantages, he would thus gain a longer passage way upstream for his

water transport or improve his chances of penetrating the Turkish defence without heavy loss. The size of General Crocker's force, the instructions issued, the transport difficulties, the weather risks, the desire to avoid heavy casualties, and the probability that a more senior officer would have been appointed to take charge of such a serious operation as an opposed crossing, all tend to confirm the opinion that General Maude hoped to effect a crossing by surprise, or, failing this, a threat against the Turkish communications which would produce the desired result.

The British artillery bombardment during the 20th December broke the enemy bridge across the Hai and appeared to have considerable effect on his positions at Sannaiyat and in the Kut—Hai area; and the British air force, besides bombing Bughaila effectively, brought down an enemy "Albatross" aeroplane, which crashed near Kut. In the latter encounter, however, one of our own machines was hit, but was able to land in our own lines.

The British casualties on the 20th were 93, which brought the total for the seven days' operations up to 720.

During the 21st December our artillery continued its bombardment of the enemy positions on the right bank opposite Kut and also of his Sannaiyat position; and ten of our aeroplanes dropped nearly a ton of bombs on the enemy shipping and stores at Bughaila, doing considerable damage. The air raid on Bughaila was repeated on the 22nd, but results could not be observed owing to darkness.

In considering the deliberate and rather cautious manner in which General Maude had so far conducted the operations it is necessary to bear certain points in mind. His plan, which had received the approval of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, was to establish himself on the Hai, and he had apparently no very definite idea of what he would be able to effect after that; he had received very clear instructions to avoid heavy casualties; and the failures of his predecessors in command must have tended to induce caution on his part. Moreover, it is believed that, at the commencement of his active operations, he had not that confidence in the fighting qualities of the Indian army, of which the bulk of his force was composed, with which their exploits under his command soon inspired him.

On the 22nd December the Chief of the Imperial General Staff telegraphed saying that, as far as he could judge from a distance, the time had come for General Maude to make

up his mind either to be ready to fight to obtain greater advantages or to be satisfied with his position on the Hai. It appeared to Sir William Robertson that General Maude could no longer hope to manœuvre the enemy out of his position, but substantial advantages would be gained and would be an adequate return worth fighting for, if General Maude could make it impossible for the enemy to maintain himself either at Sannaiyat or Kut or both. General Maude alone could judge whether he could obtain a substantial measure of success at reasonable cost, which the Chief of the Imperial General Staff put at roughly 25 per cent. of infantry actually engaged.

General Maude replied on the 23rd saying :—

"In moving forward, it was my intention to secure the line of the Hai, possession of which gives us considerable advantages . . . I proposed, when firmly established there and when the situation seemed ripe for further progress, to advance on the Euphrates line to Samawa. I am now considering this further move, but wish to be sure of my ground before taking such a step and will refer to you before doing so. . . .

"Our position on Hai meanwhile places us in a favourable position to act against the enemy's communications; and while our infantry are securing the Hai line it will be possible for raids to be carried out by our cavalry against the enemy's lines of supply and so continually worry him.

"From the relative position of the two forces on the map it may seem that we ought to be doing more than we are against the enemy's communications, but the wide extent of our front and the nature of the country over which we have to operate limit our efforts in this direction, as well as the fact that the bulk of our force on the Tigris front has now to be supplied by the single line of the Shaikh Saad—Sinn railway.* The question of a possible break in the weather must always be borne in mind, as this is a factor which will not only seriously affect our railways but also our land transport.

"However, I am not unmindful that it may be possible to strike a blow at the enemy, and the information contained in your telegram giving me a rough idea as to the casualties which I am justified in incurring, so that further

* An extension of this from Imam al Mansur to Atab had been commenced on the 15th December.

substantial advantages may be obtained, is most helpful. But I should like to watch my opportunity. With reasonable preparation I could secure at any time at moderate cost say the first two lines of the Sannaiyat position, but this . . . would lead to nothing beyond paving the way for a succession of further similar frontal attacks. Again, under normal circumstances, forcing a passage across the river line held by the enemy must be costly and it is for this reason that I am first devoting my attention to driving the Turks from the right bank.

"With your approval, therefore, I would propose:

"(1) to secure our position on Hai in case the enemy should be reinforced;

"(2) to endeavour to clear the right bank of the Tigris entirely of the enemy;

"(3) if and when the moment seems propitious, to push forward to Samawa after duly notifying you;

and

"(4) to watch for a favourable opportunity for attacking any weak spot in the enemy's line.

"Meanwhile it is found that any action I can reasonably take against the enemy's communications embarrasses him considerably."

On the 26th December the Chief of the Imperial General Staff telegraphed saying that, in making his plans, General Maude should be prepared for the possibility of the 13th Division being withdrawn from Mesopotamia about the end of February. Hence it was important that, if he could improve his position so as to make it more defensible during the hot weather, he should do so before the departure of the 13th Division. Subject to this general consideration, Sir William Robertson was in agreement with General Maude's proposed action.

By the 22nd December, 1916, it had become evident to the British that their constant bombardments were affecting the nerves of the enemy—who were now strung out in a sparsely held line along the Tigris from Sannaiyat to westward of Shumran—as at the slightest alarm their infantry started to fire wildly. But from this date to the beginning of January 1917, there is little of incident to relate regarding the British operations. The Ist and IIIrd Corps on the right bank of the Tigris were mainly occupied in consolidating their positions and in improving their communications, while those of their

infantry facing the Khudhaira bend, Kut and the eastern face of the Hai salient pushed their advanced trenches gradually nearer the enemy. By the 25th December the British infantry had established themselves on the river bank opposite Kut in the space between the Turkish trenches at Khudhaira and the Hai salient. In this space was the junction of the Ist Corps left flank with the right of the IIIrd Corps.

On the 24th December the cavalry carried out a successful raid against an Arab stronghold known as Ghusab's Fort, eighteen miles south-east of Kut, which had long been a haunt of hostile tribesmen. Reaching the fort soon after daybreak, they blew it up and destroyed all the stores, ammunition, etc., thus depriving the Arabs of their most important base for raids. On the 26th, the sky looked so threatening as to cause General Maude anxiety in regard to his supply situation should the weather break badly; and he decided to ease matters by sending his cavalry back to Arab Village. This proved a timely decision, for the rain came down heavily the same afternoon and continued, with the exception of three days (31st December to 2nd January), every day till the 6th January. The whole area became deep in mud, camels and motor lorries were immobilised, carts carried less and stuck frequently, pack mules had to make fewer or slower journeys, and even the railway trains, carrying half loads, took double the usual time over their journeys, the engines being frequently held up by the mud on the rails, left in some cases by infantry crossing the line. Operations were impossible on anything but a very small scale and even raids and reconnaissances could only be carried out to a limited extent. Work on roads and bridges and the railway extension to Atab continued, but under difficult conditions. It had been General Maude's intention to extend his railway westward across the Hai, which since the 6th January had developed with the rain into a considerable river several feet deep. But owing to his transport limitations he could not see his way to getting up the necessary heavy bridging material; and he abandoned the idea.

At the beginning of January 1917, the authorised establishment of the whole expeditionary force in Mesopotamia was 120,472 combatants* and 83,028 followers. The ration strength was some 45,000 over this number, but it included troops in hospital and moving in relief, local labour and men employed

* British officers	- -	4,482	British other ranks	- -	51,988
Indian officers	- -	1,518	Indian other ranks	- -	62,484

in various ways on other non-combatant duties. The Order of Battle of the Tigris force had changed but little from the detail given in Appendix XXXIV. The 3rd Division artillery had been strengthened by the arrival of the 524th (Howitzer) Battery, R.F.A.; six Stokes Mortar batteries were with the Ist Corps;* a squadron of the 10th Lancers from the Tigris Defences had been attached temporarily to the IIIrd Corps; the 3rd Brahmans had been replaced in the 35th Brigade by the 102nd Grenadiers from the Tigris Defences; Nos. 783 and 784 Mechanical Transport Companies had reached the front; and Nos. 13 and 14 Light Armoured Motor Batteries had arrived at Basra.

From the first week in December onwards, there were persistent reports, received both by General Maude and General Baratoff, that the Turks intended to retire from Hamadan; but cavalry reconnaissances by the Russians in that area in the middle of December disclosed no indications of any such intention. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff kept the Russians informed of General Maude's progress; but the first two telegrams on the subject appear to have miscarried and it was not till near the end of the month that the Russians heard from the Chief of the Imperial General Staff that General Maude's operations menaced so seriously the Turkish advanced positions on the Tigris left bank as to be likely to draw Turkish reserves in that direction.

On the 27th December General Maude estimated that the Turkish force opposite him consisted of three squadrons, 27 battalions, 72 guns (including 6 anti-aircraft) and 10 trench mortars, with an approximate strength of 300 sabres and 18,700 rifles. The actual disposition of this force was believed to be as follows: 9 battalions, 19 guns and 6 trench mortars in the Sannaiyat position, with a further 3 battalions and 12 guns between there and Kut; 6 battalions, 21 guns and 4 trench mortars in Kut, the Khudhaira bend and the Hai salient; 6 battalions and 8 guns on both river banks in the Shumran bend; and 3 squadrons, 3 battalions and 6 guns holding the line from this bend to and including Bughaila. According to statements of deserters, the 45th, 51st and 52nd Turkish Divisions had each the whole of their three regiments, i.e., nine battalions, with them on the Tigris, except that the 56th Regiment had replaced the 44th gone to Persia.

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* Of fifteen projected only nine appear to have been formed at this time one was at Nasiriya and two were under training.

Available information does not permit of an accurate check of this estimate, but it was certainly wrong in two particulars. The 37th Regiment of the 52nd Division was no longer on the Tigris, having been sent to Persia some time before; and it was two battalions of the 156th, not the 56th, Regiment which had recently arrived. Our Intelligence Staff had just learnt that the Turks were about to reorganise their 4th Division, located about Ruwandiz, to include the 10th, 156th and 167th Regiments; and the 156th* seems to have been the first regiment of this reorganised division to reach the Tigris.

In addition to making various changes in the designations of their units, the Turks were continually moving regiments and other units from one formation to another; and this made it very difficult for the Russians and ourselves to keep up an accurate Turkish Order of Battle. At the beginning of January 1917, we obtained reliable information that Enver had just sent Halil instructions that, as the latest aeroplane reports showed that General Maude had not received important reinforcements, the Sixth Army would be strong enough to start an offensive as soon as it was joined by the 14th Division, provided that Baghdad was not threatened by the Russians A day or two later our Intelligence Staff in Egypt obtained news, also from a reliable source, that the Turks intended to organise a IIIrd Army Corps, formed of the 4th and 14th Divisions, to reinforce their Sixth Army; though this information was somewhat discounted a few days later by further news, from an apparently reliable source, that this IIIrd Army Corps was to be employed at once in an offensive operation in Armenia. The 14th Division had been located opposite the Russians in Armenia in the line of the Second Turkish Army; and enquiries from the Russian Staff elicited the opinion that this division was still there. It seemed apparent, therefore, that the 14th Division could not reach the Tigris till about the end of January. We now know that the Russians were mistaken. The regiment (12th) of the 14th Division which they had identified in the line opposite them had been exchanged some time before this with the 149th Regiment of the 47th Division; and in reality both the 4th and 14th Divisions were then *en route* to the Tigris, where part of the 4th Division had already arrived.

Owing to the news of General Maude's operations and to a recurrence of the reports that a Turkish withdrawal from

* It was subsequently learnt that the other two battalions of this regiment went to the Euphrates front.

Hamadan was in progress, General Baratoff started, on the 1st January, 1917, operations along his whole front, in order to ascertain the enemy's intentions and prevent his withdrawal. These operations, carried out in considerable force, continued for three days till stopped by snow falling; but by then, at a cost of some 300 casualties, the Russians had come to the conclusion that no Turkish withdrawal had taken place. Information from Turkish sources confirms this opinion.

Muhammad Amin in "Baghdad and the Story of its Last Fall," says that on the 4th January the commander of the XVIII Corps warned Halil Pasha of the dangerous situation on the Tigris and recommended an evacuation of his positions on the right bank. Halil, however, considering that an obstinate resistance on the right bank would gain time and also break the enemy's offensive powers, refused to agree; but in accordance with the urgent request of the XVIII Corps commander he moved his own headquarters to the Tigris, establishing them at Qala Shadi, twenty miles west of Kut, on the 8th January. His confidence in the ability of the Turkish force on the Tigris to withstand all British attacks is evidenced by the assurance he is said to have telegraphed to Turkish General Headquarters the next day, that it was unnecessary to recall troops from Persia.

Muhammad Amin blames Halil and his staff at this period for their lack of foresight. If about the end of December they had ordered the withdrawal of the XIII Corps from Persia it could, he considered, have joined the XVIII Corps before General Maude forced a passage across the Tigris. Muhammad Amin says that the XIII and XVIII Corps were then each about 10,000 strong; the 4th and 14th Divisions together would have provided another 5,000; some thousands of drafts with a plentiful supply of ammunition were on their way to Baghdad down the Euphrates; and, with the 37th Regiment, Halil could have concentrated about 30,000 men, who could have offered an obstinate and protracted resistance.

As it was, Muhammad Amin expresses the opinion that Sannaiyat, Kut, and Shumran should have been evacuated and several positions prepared in rear to cover the retreat or for further resistance, as Nur-ud-Din had done in 1915. Halil, he says, refused to consider any suggestions to this effect, and it was not till the very day that General Maude crossed the Tigris at Shumran that he ordered a position to be prepared at Qala Shadi.

To return to operations on the Tigris front. General Maude had decided to make a beginning of his operations for clearing the Tigris right bank of the enemy by an attack on the Turkish lines of entrenchments across the Khudhaira bend. This position, which was skilfully sited and well prepared, was a menace to our communications with the Hai, as from it the Turks could inundate portions of our line whenever the river rose sufficiently.

With their flanks resting on the river and their front covered by a cross enfilading fire from positions to the north and south across the river, these Khudhaira trenches also provided a strong covering outwork for the main Turkish defences at Kut and in the Hai salient. Communication between the Khudhaira position and the left bank was maintained by ferries, which, owing to the conformation of the ground, were protected from our direct rifle or gun fire.

The Turkish first line was about a mile and a half long facing eastward, with an excellent field of fire over flat ground covered with short grass and low camel thorn. At its southern end, about two hundred yards from and parallel to the river, was a double row of low sandhills, on which the enemy had constructed a " strong point " with covered-in machine gun emplacements. The second line was from five hundred to one thousand yards behind the first line; but in the intervening space there were various trenches and dry water channels prepared for defence, as well as a good deal of thick brushwood, which rendered the field of fire somewhat limited, but at the same time gave men good cover from view between the two lines. The third line included about one hundred and fifty yards of the southern extremity of the second line and then, turning back almost at right angles, ran for about five hundred yards till it reached some low sandhills along the river bank, where high and thick grass and brushwood were growing. In front of this third line, marked L.K.M. on the inset to Map 22, the Turks had cleared a good field of fire.

Under constant rain and exposed to considerable enfilade and direct enemy fire, the 8th and 9th Infantry Brigades of the 3rd Division had been occupied for twelve days, from Christmas Day 1916, in driving in the enemy's advanced posts and in sapping forward towards the Khudhaira position; and in this period, under these trying conditions, they had dug a total of about fourteen miles length of trenches. By the 6th January, 1917, when the weather conditions improved, the 9th Brigade, extending from the Tigris on a frontage of

about seven hundred yards, had established itself within two hundred yards of the enemy's right. On the 9th Brigade right the 8th Brigade carried on the line for some 2,300 yards northward to the Tigris bank, the portion of its line nearest to the enemy being within four hundred and fifty yards of the enemy's first line.

There were now only two infantry brigades of the 7th Division on the Tigris left bank facing Sannaiyat. The third brigade held the right bank westward to Chahela; and from there to a point two miles west of Maqasis the river line was watched by the 7th Brigade of the 3rd Division. For the operations against Khudhaira the remainder of General Keary's 3rd Division was supported by 56 guns.*

On the 6th January General Maude issued an operation order, in which he announced the intention of capturing on the 9th the right, or southern, portion of the enemy's position at Khudhaira (i.e., as far as line marked A.B. on the inset to Map 22). The strength of the enemy's force in the Shumran—Hai—Kut area was estimated at about 60 sabres, 12,700 rifles, 39 guns, and 4 trench mortars; between Shumran and Bughaila he was thought to have 200 sabres and 100 rifles on the Tigris right bank and 700 rifles with 6 guns on the left bank; and there was a detachment of about 750 men, including some 300 cavalry, under Subhi Bey ten miles south of Atab.

Prior to the 9th January certain preliminary measures were to be taken. General Cobbe, commanding the Ist Corps, was to arrange for general activity against Sannaiyat and along the Tigris, as well as for systematic wire-cutting in front, and bombardment, of the Khudhaira trenches to be assaulted. General Marshall, commanding the IIIrd Corps, was to cut the wire in front of, and bombard, the Hai salient, as well as to take such steps as were feasible to lead the Turks to believe that an attack in this direction was imminent.

The following operations were to be carried out on the 9th January. The Cavalry Division,† leaving Besouia early on the night 8th/9th, was to seize Bughaila, raid or destroy the enemy shipping within range and possibly obtain a footing on the Tigris left bank. The cavalry commander was to act vigorously, but with discretion, and was given latitude to fall

* 7th and 66th Batteries, R.F.A. = 12; 66th Brigade, R.F.A. = 16; B/215th and C/215th Batteries, R.F.A. = 8; 60th and 61st (Howitzer) Batteries, R.F.A. = 12; 2/104th Battery (60-pounders) = 4; 524th (Howitzer) Battery, R.F.A. = 4. Total 56.

† It moved from Arab Village to Besouia on the 7th January.

back towards Besouia if lack of supplies or the situation required it. General Cobbe was to arrange for vigorous bombardments and raids against Sannaiyat, while General Marshall was to carry out a bombardment and such other activities as might be possible against the Hai salient. A force of all arms, as large as General Marshall could spare, was also to be deployed before daybreak south of the Shumran bend, so as to operate with the intention of driving in the enemy's posts on the right bank south and west of the Shumran bend and of shelling the Shumran bend. An infantry brigade (less two battalions) was to be detailed by the IIIrd Corps as Army Reserve under General Maude's orders. Lastly, the assault on the Khudhaira trenches, which was not to commence before 8.30 a.m., nor later than 9.30 a.m., was to be carried out under detailed arrangements to be made by General Cobbe.

The Royal Flying Corps were, on the 8th, to prevent hostile air reconnaissance of our positions; and on the 9th, besides keeping the Army, Corps and Cavalry commanders informed of the enemy's movements and the commanders of lower formations of any matters of immediate and direct interest to them, were to work with the artillery, bomb and scatter any large hostile formations noticed and give early information of any Arab gathering west or south of our line.

A special allowance of ammunition for these operations from the 5th to the 9th January inclusive was notified. This amounted to: 18-pounder, 23,000 rounds for Ist Corps, 3,500 rounds for IIIrd Corps; 4·5-inch, 6,500 rounds for Ist Corps, 1,000 rounds for IIIrd Corps; 60-pounder, 1,500 rounds for Ist Corps, 100 rounds for IIIrd Corps.

On the 7th, which was a fine, clear, cold day, General Maude approved generally the arrangements which the Ist and IIIrd Corps commanders had planned for carrying out their instructions; and General Marshall was told that his detached force in operating against Shumran was not to commit itself to a fight which it could not break off at will. The same day, General Cobbe, during a visit to the headquarters 3rd Division, 8th and 9th Brigades, discussed the final arrangements for the coming assault.

On the morning of the 8th there was at first a thick mist and then the cloudy sky seemed to indicate rain; but after discussion it was decided not to postpone the attack unless heavy or continuous rain actually fell. In the evening there was again a thick mist and this necessitated cancelling the diversions against Bughaila and Shumran by the cavalry and IIIrd Corps.

The effectiveness of the British bombardment of the Khudhaira trenches from the 5th to 8th January is indicated by a Turkish document, which was found in the position during the subsequent operations. It ran as follows :—

" By Telephone to

Imam Muhammad * Sector

8.1.17.

" 1. The steadfastness of the troops in the Imam Muhammad sector in face of the enemy's violent bombardment, and especially of our infantry who held their ground in spite of bloody losses during to-day's bombardment in the mist, is above all praise.

" The Corps Commander kisses the eyes of all ranks and thanks them. I too kiss all their eyes and thank them.

" 2. To-night the 3/142nd will cross over to your sector. It will take the place of that one of your battalions (including the 3/3rd) which has suffered the heaviest losses. . . .†

" Ismail Hakki, Acting O.C.

" 45th Division."

The assault on Khudhaira was to be carried out by the 8th Infantry Brigade, with a detachment 20th Company Sappers and Miners, a company 34th Pioneers and four Stokes mortars attached, and by the 9th Infantry Brigade, with a detachment 18th Company Sappers and Miners, a company 34th Pioneers and two Stokes mortars attached. They were to be supported by the fifty-six guns already mentioned, as well as by three batteries (one 18-pounder, one 4·5-inch howitzer and one 60-pounder) from the 13th Division. The portion of the Turkish front line to be first assaulted extended from the strong point on the sandhills northwards for six hundred yards ; and the final objective for the day's operation was to be the dry water channel marked A.B. on the inset to Map 22. The 9th Brigade was to assault the four hundred yards frontage extending from the strong point, which was one hundred and fifty yards away from the river bank, to the point where there was a distinct bend northward in the Turkish line. On the immediate right of the 9th Brigade, the 8th Brigade, less a battalion and six machine guns, was to assault the Turkish first line on a frontage of two hundred yards extending northwards from this bend ; and the detached

* Khudhaira.

† The 3rd and 142nd Regiments both belonged to the 45th Division.

battalion and machine guns were to hold the rest of the 8th Brigade front, a length of over a mile, to contain the enemy force opposite them and to take advantage of any Turkish retirement in that area by occupying and consolidating the northern portion of the enemy's first line.

Detailed instructions were issued for artillery support and co-operation, "zero" hour being fixed at 8.45 a.m. There was to be an hour's deliberate bombardment and final wire-cutting from 7.30 to 8.30, when artillery fire would cease till 8.45; and the infantry assaulting lines were to leave their trenches so as to arrive within fifty yards of the enemy's first line by 9 a.m., at which hour it was to be rushed.

On the morning of the 9th January there was a heavy mist, which lasted till about 3 p.m.; but the planned arrangements proceeded smoothly, and at 8.45 a.m. the artillery opened the intense phase of its bombardment. The 9th Brigade attacked on its four hundred yard frontage with two and a half battalions in front line. On the left, half the 1/1st Gurkhas advanced between the sandhills against the enemy's strong point, with the 105th Mahrattas on their right and the 93rd Infantry on the right of the 105th; the remaining half 1/1st Gurkhas held the line from the sandhills to the river and for a short distance back along the river bank; and the 1st Highland Light Infantry remained in Brigade Reserve. The 8th Brigade, assaulting on a two hundred yard front, had the 1st Manchester in first line, the 59th Rifles in second and the 2/124th Baluchistan Infantry in third line; while the 47th Sikhs acted as a containing force along the remainder of the brigade front.

The 9th Brigade had to cover about two hundred yards to reach the Turkish line, while the 8th Brigade had nearly double that distance to go; but the Turks appear to have been rather taken by surprise, and within a minute or two after 9 a.m. the whole Turkish first line on the frontage of assault was in our hands. Our losses had been slight and we captured a number of prisoners.

After seizing its objective, the 9th Brigade pushed on with a view to establishing itself along the dry channel marked C.D. on the inset to Map 22. In this advance the 1/1st Gurkhas (supported by a Highland Light Infantry company) and the 105th Mahrattas, on the left and centre respectively of the brigade, met with considerable opposition, but by about 11 a.m. they and the 93rd Infantry on the right had effected their purpose; and this line was then consolidated. In the

meantime, the Manchesters' leading company, after capturing the first line frontage allotted to the 8th Brigade, joined hands with the right of the 9th Brigade and started to consolidate the captured trench; its second company pushed northward up the Turkish first line; its third company advanced up the dry channel E.F. into an area covered with brushwood; its fourth company followed the second and third companies to continue consolidation of trenches captured; and two companies of the 59th Rifles received orders to occupy trenches as vacated by the advancing Manchesters.

About 10 a.m., under cover of the mist and the thick brushwood, the Turks delivered a strong counter-attack from the direction of A.B. against the Manchester company working its way up E.F. Fierce fighting ensued; the Manchesters would not give way; and overwhelmed by superior numbers, with its Lewis guns jammed by mud, the company was practically annihilated. Telephonic communication with the advanced infantry of the 8th Brigade had previously broken down, and artillery fire had ceased owing to the mist and uncertainty as to the exact positions of our infantry; so that any assistance by supporting fire was out of the question. Pressing on, the Turks caught in flank the Manchester company working up the Turkish first line, and drove it back to E, where just at this moment two sections 20th Company Sappers and Miners, a company 34th Pioneers and a company 59th Rifles arrived from the eastward. Unaware of the counter-attack and unable to see far through the mist, this party was also taken by surprise and the greater part of the 59th Rifles' company was driven back. The Sappers and Pioneers with the remainder of the 59th company made a fine stand; but they had been taken at a disadvantage and after about twenty minutes hard and close fighting were forced to give way gradually, till reinforced by the Manchester reserve company. A fierce bomb fight then took place, and the Turks were checked and then driven back about two hundred yards; but before long they came on again and gradually drove the British and Indian infantry back. Just before 3 p.m., when the mist cleared away, it was seen that the Turks were in occupation of the trenches to E inclusive and that the British right was about one hundred and fifty yards south of that point.

The first intimation received by 8th Brigade headquarters that anything had gone amiss was the arrival in the British front line at about 11 a.m. of parties of Manchesters and 59th Rifles; and it was understood from them that a Turkish

counter-attack had retaken part of the captured Turkish trench and had cut off a detachment of the Manchesters. Orders were sent to the 59th Rifles to reform and drive out the Turks again, but were cancelled a little later owing to the uncertainty regarding the whole situation. At 1 p.m. General Keary ordered two companies of his divisional reserve (2/7th Gurkhas of the 7th Brigade) forward to be at the disposal of the 8th Brigade commander; and when the actual situation became apparent about 3 p.m., arrangements were made to recapture E. A fifteen-minute artillery bombardment of this point commenced at 4.30 p.m. It was well-directed, accurate and effective; and by 5 p.m. the Manchesters had recaptured E and consolidated their position there. Not long after this General Keary was informed by General Headquarters that the headquarters and two battalions 40th Brigade had been ordered to Pentagon to be at his disposal; and he then sent the remainder of the 2/7th Gurkhas to join the 8th Brigade.

After dusk the British front line trench was joined up to point E by a fire and communication trench which, with the rest of the line held by the 8th and 9th Brigades during the ensuing night, is shown on the inset to Map 22.

During the day the 47th Sikhs on their mile of frontage had seen no indications of an evacuation of the Turkish trench in their front and had consequently made no advance. The remainder of the Ist Corps had bombarded and carried out three raids on Sannaiyat and had also made feints at crossing the Tigris. The raiding parties found the enemy in strength and sustained 37 casualties.

The British casualties on the 9th January in the 8th and 9th Brigades and the attached sappers and pioneers totalled nearly 700. The heaviest sufferers were the 1st Manchester, who lost 235, including twelve officers, the 105th Mahrattas 135, including five British officers, the 59th Rifles 115, also including five British officers, and the 1/1st Gurkhas 80, including two British officers. The Turkish losses were probably heavier, as, in addition to taking 178 prisoners, we found 200 dead in one communication trench three hundred yards long. Moreover, their artillery, greatly inferior to ours in strength, had been able to make but a feeble response to our bombardment.

During the night the 9th Brigade extended its line and took over from the 8th Brigade as far as E. The Manchesters and 59th were withdrawn from the front * and the 2/124th

* They moved back on the 10th to Pentagon to re-organise and rest.

Baluchistan Infantry took over the new trench from E to the British front line.

At 7.20 p.m., on the 9th January, General Maude issued orders to General Cobbe that the ground captured should be consolidated during the night and the next day; and three hours later General Keary issued his orders to carry this into effect. An hour and a half later he instructed the 8th and 9th Brigades to send out patrols to ascertain the enemy's positions, so that any sign of a general enemy retirement might be followed up.

On the morning of the 10th, patrols from the 9th Brigade and from the 47th Sikhs found that the line B.A.H. northward to the Tigris was clear of the enemy; and by 1 p.m. the 9th Brigade had established itself without opposition along B.A. and the 47th Sikhs along A.H. and to the Tigris. Pushing patrols along the trench westward from H, the 47th Sikhs found a portion of the Turkish second line also evacuated, and by nightfall they had occupied the trench H.G.J.; but patrols sent westward and south-westward from G were quickly checked by enemy fire.

The British dispositions during the night 10th/11th January were as follows. The three battalions temporarily composing the 8th Brigade occupied the line J.G.H.A.; the 47th Sikhs holding J.G.H and the 2/7th Gurkhas H.A., with the 2/124th Baluchis in brigade reserve behind the Gurkhas. The 9th Brigade occupied the line A.B., the Highland Light Infantry, 93rd and 105th, in this order from the right, in front, with the 1/1st Gurkhas in reserve. Patrolling throughout the night ascertained that the enemy was holding the triangle L.K.M. and the sandhills north-east of and close to M.

The movements of the Cavalry Division at this period were considerably restricted by the waterlogged state of the country. Access to the rear of the Turkish positions on the left bank of the Tigris was impossible owing to increases in the marsh waters; and the flooded country west of the Hai covered the Turkish communications in the direction of Bughaila. On the 10th January the Cavalry Division started along the east bank of the Hai for Hai town, where it was to ascertain what supplies were procurable locally.

On the 10th evening General Maude instructed the Ist Corps to continue the clearance of the Khudhaira bend, while the IIIrd Corps was to make preparations for securing systematically and deliberately the enemy's trenches forming the Hai salient; and General Maude emphasised the importance

of initiating at once preliminary operations having that object in view, so as to give the enemy no rest.

At about 8 a.m., on the 11th January, General Keary ordered the 9th Brigade to drive the enemy remaining in the triangle L.K.M. into the river or compel them to surrender. The 8th Brigade would co-operate in the operation with supporting fire. One howitzer and three field batteries were also allotted to support the 9th Brigade, two more howitzer batteries being added later.

Colonel W. C. Anderson, the 9th Brigade commander, detailed the Highland Light Infantry to assault the line L.K.; and for this purpose they concentrated during the morning on the left of the 9th Brigade line, whence they would have a distance to cover of about four hundred and fifty yards to reach L.K. At 2 p.m. the artillery was to open a half-hour's bombardment, under cover of which the Highland Light Infantry were to advance for about two hundred and fifty yards, and at 2.30 p.m., under cover of a two minutes' intense bombardment, they were to cover the last two hundred yards in a rush. The 8th Brigade was to co-operate with machine gun fire from a position about four hundred yards south-west of G, while the 2/124th Baluchis bombed down the Turkish second line trench towards K.

In carrying out the first two hundred and fifty yard advance, the three leading companies of the Highland Light Infantry suffered considerably from heavy direct and enfilade rifle and gun fire; but they carried through their assault successfully and captured L.K. In support following them were the fourth company Highland Light Infantry and a company 93rd Infantry.

The Turks counter-attacked immediately and drove the Highland Light Infantry out of L.K. on to their supports. These companies, which had suffered severely from enfilade gun fire, were unable to restore the situation and by 2.40 the whole of the assaulting force was back in the British front line. The Turks, attempting to follow up, advanced about two hundred yards and were then forced to retire again, losing heavily in the process from our machine gun fire. The 2/124th Baluchis, of the 8th Brigade, who had meanwhile reached to within about two hundred yards of K, were also counter-attacked about the same time and were driven back with loss. Emboldened apparently by their success, the Turks now started another counter-attack from the sandhills and thick brushwood along the river bank north-east of M.

Emerging from this cover quite deliberately, their infantry formed up in line and started to advance across the open at a steady trot. The 47th Sikhs from G very soon drove them back, however, with considerable losses, and as they retreated the British artillery inflicted further loss until they reached the brushwood, which provided them with a most efficient screen from observation.

In this operation the British had been surprised by the opposition encountered; and, from the intensity of the enemy's artillery fire and the strength of his counter-attack, came to the conclusion that Turkish reinforcements must have crossed the river during the preceding night and that our assault had forestalled an attempt by them to regain the ground they had already lost.

The British casualties in the 8th and 9th Brigades totalled over 650, of which the 2/124th Baluchis contributed 262 (including 10 British officers) and the 1st Highland Light Infantry 211 (including 15 officers). In view of their heavy losses, these two battalions were withdrawn from the front line and were temporarily replaced in the 8th and 9th Brigades, respectively, by the 2/119th Infantry and the 2nd Dorsetshire * from the Tigris Defences.

It was now decided to clear the enemy out of the Khudhaira bend by a systematic and deliberate converging advance accompanied by constant bombardment of the enemy positions. In consequence, the operations from the 11th to the 18th January consisted of a series of short advances, frequently entailing hard fighting by comparatively small forces, in which the British and Indian infantry of the 3rd Division † gradually pushed the Turkish advanced posts back till the evening of the 18th. The British advanced line by then was within two hundred yards of L.K.; and arrangements were made for an assault next morning.

The Turks, however, evidently realised the hopelessness of further resistance, for during the night 18th/19th they evacuated their trenches and withdrew across the river. They had made a most gallant resistance and had suffered very heavy casualties in the preceding fortnight. ‡ In his despatch,

* Both these battalions had been formed to replace battalions captured in Kut.

† On the 13th and 14th January the 7th Brigade relieved the 9th Brigade, who took over the front hitherto held by the former brigade.

‡ This is clear from the references to the operations in Muhammad Amin's "Baghdad and the Story of its Last Fall" and confirms the conclusions deduced from the hundreds of Turkish dead found by us in the captured positions.

in describing these operations, General Maude said: "the fighting had been severe and mainly hand to hand, but the enemy, in spite of his tenacity, had more than met his match in the dash and resolution of our troops, and had learnt a lesson which was to become more deeply engrained on subsequent occasions." Of the 3rd Indian Division under General Keary, who are the troops alluded to, the 1st Manchester, 47th Sikhs, 105th Mahrattas and 1/1st Gurkhas had especially distinguished themselves. During the eleven days' fighting the division had incurred a total of 1,639 casualties.

In the meantime, the cavalry movement to Hai town had been successfully carried out. Meeting with some slight Arab opposition on the 10th and capturing 15,000 rounds of British rifle ammunition in a fort five miles north of it, the cavalry occupied the town about 11 a.m. on the 11th January. The inhabitants gave them a friendly welcome and readily furnished them, on payment, with supplies, which were found to be plentiful. Some Turkish arms and ammunition in a Turkish Government building were confiscated and arrangements were made with the inhabitants for a future supply to General Maude's force of sheep and vegetables, though some doubts were felt whether these arrangements would be kept by the Arabs. On the afternoon of the 13th General Maude sent General Crocker orders to return, bringing with him as much grain as his transport could carry.

On the morning of the 14th, the crowds which collected to see the cavalry start still maintained a friendly attitude; but, as soon as the rear guard had left the town about a mile behind, these Arabs at once started to follow up and attack the retiring British cavalry. Joined by many others from fortified villages on both flanks, the Arabs continued their pursuit for several hours. There was a good deal of detached fighting, but the British contented themselves with rear guard tactics, though in one instance a squadron (14th Lancers) took advantage of an opening and charged a gathering of Arabs, doing considerable damage; and the Arabs were finally shaken off about 4 p.m., having, it was estimated, lost 100 to 150 of their number. The total British casualties amounted to twenty-four.

Next day, in retaliation for the treachery of its inhabitants, an aeroplane raid was carried out against the town.

On the 10th January the Chief of the Imperial General Staff telegraphed to General Maude that recent information showed that the Turkish force on the Tigris would probably

be reinforced strongly about the end of the month, which indicated that General Maude's operations were having a good effect. But Sir William Robertson desired to know what General Maude intended to do if this supposition proved to be correct and particularly whether he was satisfied that his communications on the left bank of the Tigris could be protected.

General Maude replied next day. He proposed to continue offensive operations until he heard that the reinforcements were approaching, when he would act temporarily on the defensive till he had ascertained where the enemy attack seemed to be intended. Should it be directed against the position he then held, and the enemy's force had been substantially increased, he would await attack and this should be in his favour. If, on the other hand, the attack was directed against his communications between Fallahiya and Ali Gharbi from the north, he would detach an adequate force, including the Cavalry Division, to meet it. General Maude's superior air force ensured him timely information; and, with his more numerous cavalry giving him superior mobility, a fight in the open should place the Turks at a disadvantage. The wet state of the country enduring till April would make such a movement difficult for the Turks, whose supply situation, as they could not rely as our mobile columns could on the river line of maintenance, was bound to be precarious. Assuming that overwhelming numbers were not sent by the enemy, General Maude did not consider that we need view this contingency with anxiety.

On the 12th January General Maude telegraphed, in continuation of the above, that he estimated that he was then opposed on the Tigris by thirty battalions, comprising the 45th, 51st and 52nd Divisions, in addition to an extra regiment, whose designation was uncertain. He also estimated that Halil could reinforce the Tigris front with two divisions, one each from his Ruwandiz * and Hamadan fronts, with artillery in proportion, while it was possible, though not probable, that these two divisions might be increased to four.

Information continued to be received of movements of considerable bodies of Turkish troops going towards Baghdad, both from their Armenian front and down their Euphrates line of communication; and it appeared possible that the

* Information had again been received that the 14th Division was to form, with the 4th Division on the Ruwandiz front, the IIIrd Army Corps.

Turkish 7th and 41st Divisions were also destined for Mesopotamia. In view of this, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff asked General Maude on the 18th January whether he had considered the possibility of a Turkish attack down the Euphrates, where it seemed possible that one or both of these divisions might attempt to operate.

General Maude replied next day that he had given the point careful consideration. The Turks had only some 1,500 men on the Euphrates below Musaiyib and, even if reinforced with two divisions, they could be held in check by our force on the Euphrates. For many reasons it seemed more likely that the Turks would send every reinforcement they could spare to the Tigris; but if it became desirable to strengthen our force on the Euphrates, General Maude could detach troops from the Tigris for the purpose and pass temporarily there to the defensive He would expect to get early news of any Turkish movement in force down the Euphrates from friendly tribes south of Baghdad.

The British about this time came into possession of an interesting document which gave the Turkish General Staff estimate of the British force available for an offensive in Mesopotamia, and which, it will be seen, was, with slight exceptions, fairly accurate. They placed the 3rd, 7th, 14th and 15th Indian and 13th British Divisions in Mesopotamia with an estimated total strength of 88,000; they had received reports of the recent arrival in Mesopotamia of the 8th Indian Division with a probable strength of 12,000; and there were in India available for reinforcements 25,000 men, including the 1st and 4th Divisions, but as this would dangerously weaken the garrison there the Turkish General Staff thought it unlikely that they would leave India.

At this period in Southern Persia General Sir Percy Sykes with his small detachment of regular troops was raising the South Persia Rifles, a Persian force, to take the place of the rebellious gendarmerie; but during December 1916, some of his detachments met with reverses at the hands of rebellious elements in the neighbourhood. This gave rise to some anxiety and the question of undertaking operations from Bushire northward towards Shiraz was considered; but military opinion in England, India and Mesopotamia was against any such extension of our commitments. The local situation was gradually restored, the despatch of some more Indian troops via Bandar Abbas to reinforce General Sykes producing a tranquillising effect. It was, however, decided to place

General Sykes' operations under the military control of the Government of India, instead of under the British Foreign Office as had been the case to date, with the proviso that this control was to be exercised in close liaison with the British Minister at Tehran.

In Afghanistan the correctness of the neutral attitude still maintained by the Amir was apparent to our officials in India, who also appreciated that most if not all the leading men in that country held opposite views of a pro-German and pro-Turk nature. The idea was widely accepted in Afghanistan that serious Turco-German attempts would be made in the course of 1917 to get through Persia and Afghanistan to India and it seemed evident that if they succeeded their advent would receive enthusiastic support.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE BATTLE OF KUT AL AMARA, 1917 (*continued*).

CAPTURE OF THE HAI SALIENT AND THE DAHRA BEND; 11TH JANUARY—16TH FEBRUARY, 1917.

(MAPS 22 and 23.)

IT appears that when he asked General Marshall on the 10th January for his proposals for the immediate commencement of operations by the IIIrd Corps against the Hai salient, General Maude was of opinion that fighting in the Khudhaira bend was practically over.

General Marshall submitted his proposals the same day and also arranged a redistribution of his troops. The portion of the IIIrd Corps line facing the Hai salient extended at this time from the Tigris bank, immediately south-east of Kut town, in a south-westerly direction to the Hai, now a broad stream some fourteen feet deep, and thence, after running about a mile due west, bent back southwards. The distance separating this line from the Turkish trenches varied from about three hundred yards on the Tigris bank to about one thousand yards at, and west of, the apex of the salient; the stretch to the east of the Hai, some two and three-quarter miles long, being held by the 38th Brigade and the mile front west of the Hai by the 39th Brigade.

On the 11th January the 35th Brigade took over the left half of the 39th Brigade front and two battalions of the 40th Brigade took over the extreme left portion of the 38th Brigade front. After dark, this reinforced line pushed forward, advancing over four hundred yards on both banks of the Hai and rather less elsewhere; and these gains were consolidated in face of hostile fire, which especially hampered the digging of the 39th Brigade and caused it 56 casualties. During the night 81 further casualties occurred in the Corps.

The fighting in the Khudhaira bend on the 11th showed General Maude that the operations there were by no means over; and on the morning of the 12th General Marshall informed his subordinate commanders that, as he would be very short of supporting artillery until the Khudhaira operations finished, a further advance by the IIIrd Corps was not contemplated for the time being. In consequence, the next few days were mainly occupied in consolidating the ground gained; though a few slight advances were made, especially on the 35th Brigade left.

As was his custom, General Maude discussed in great detail with General Marshall the latter's plans for the coming operations and on the 18th January sent formal approval of the IIIrd Corps commander's proposal to deliver on the 25th the first assault against the Hai salient. General Maude said that while he was most anxious—owing to considerations of weather, the possible arrival of Turkish reinforcements and the inadvisability of giving the enemy extra time to strengthen his defences—that no time should be lost in preparations, he particularly desired that the operations should be conducted deliberately and systematically. If General Marshall found that he could deliver the assault earlier he was to give General Headquarters as much notice as possible, as the movements of the Cavalry Division might be involved. The memorandum then went on to summarise the various points discussed, among which may be noted: "Enemy's first line to be secured and consolidated firmly before assault on enemy's second line is delivered." From our experience of Turkish tactics in the Khudhaira bend, General Marshall considered that by adopting a limited objective as a principle he could best meet the enemy's inevitable counter-attacks.

On the 20th January, the day after the Khudhaira bend was captured, General Maude issued his operation order. The strength of the enemy in front and to the left flank of the IIIrd Corps was estimated at 300 sabres, 51 guns and 11,800 rifles (twenty battalions), disposed as follows:—*

	Sabres.	*Guns.*	*Battalions.*	*Rifles.*
Hai salient, east bank ..	—	—	3	1,650
Hai salient, west bank ..	—	4	3	2,050
Kut peninsula	30	29	3	1,700
Hai salient—Shumran (inclusive).	—	—	5	2,400
Shumran (exclusive)—Bughaila.	210	6	2	1,500
Dahra (General Reserve) ..	60	12†	4	2,500

* Muhammad Amin in "Baghdad and the Story of its Last Fall" describes the Turkish situation at this time as follows: "The XVIII Corps which had been bled white by the losses at Imam Muhammad (i.e., Khudhaira bend) had temporarily withdrawn its shattered forces to the marshy ground west of the Hai. It was trying to gain time to retire to the tragic position at Bashara (i.e., Dahra bend) which had been prepared in rear. The 51st Division was still holding on to the Sannaiyat position, where for days and months it had withstood the enemy's murderous fire. Exposed to continual pressure from enemy cavalry in the back areas on the right bank as far as Bughaila, the XVIII Corps held a line fifty-three miles long with 12,000 men."

† Including four anti-aircraft guns.

It was General Maude's intention that the IIIrd Corps should drive the enemy from his trench system in the area N.14—P.15—N.30.

Prior to the 24th January, the date of the first assault,* the IIIrd Corps was to carry out preliminary measures, such as wire-cutting, registration, bombardment, improvement of assembly trenches, sapping forward, etc.

A special mission was to be carried out by the Cavalry Division; the Ist Corps was during the next few days to make such diversions on its front as were practicable without undue casualties; and the capture and consolidation of the line P.10.a.—P.15—P.12.a.—P.12.b. was given as the first objective of the IIIrd Corps. (See Map 23.)

On the same day General Maude ordered the Ist Corps to detail an infantry brigade to be attached on the 22nd to the IIIrd Corps, to relieve some of its units protecting the rear and flank to the south and west of the Hai.†

The special mission allotted to the Cavalry Division was to cross the Tigris at Arab Village on the 22nd and, moving via Badra and Jassan, to make a diversion from the latter place on the 24th so as to draw the enemy's attention away from the IIIrd Corps assault. Lightly equipped with transport, the cavalry were to obtain most of their supplies locally; and they had instructions to act with extreme boldness. As it turned out, however, the weather necessitated the abandonment of the project. Although a cavalry reconnaissance, carried out between the 18th and the 20th, had discovered a route to Badra practicable for wheels, heavy rain in the afternoon and night of the 22nd, coming on after the cavalry had started, rendered the ground so heavy and difficult for transport that the division had to be recalled, arriving back at Arab Village on the 24th.

On the 20th the British Air Force carried out a raid against the citadel at Baghdad where there were aeroplanes and a munitions factory. The actual effect of this raid is unknown.

Full details of the general distribution of the British forces in Mesopotamia on the 21st January are given in Appendix XXXVI. From this it will be seen that six 2-inch trench mortar batteries (four mortars each) and No. 13 Light

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* This date had been altered, i.e., since the 18th; and it was again changed subsequently to the 25th, to give more time for artillery registration.

† It is noteworthy how, throughout these operations, General Maude considered it necessary to protect his rear and flanks against possible Arab attack.

Armoured Motor Battery had joined the force on the Tigris front, which had also been strengthened by some additional anti-aircraft guns.

By the morning of the 23rd the rain had ceased, the ground began to dry up quickly and there was promise of fine weather.

The IIIrd Corps, with headquarters at Atab, was now disposed as follows. The 13th Division, facing the eastern and southern faces of the Hai salient, was holding the line N.12—P.22.k.—P.21.b.* On its left, the 35th Brigade of the 14th Division continued the line through P.19.a.—P.19—P.20 to Q.17; and from there to R.23 it was occupied by a battalion of the 37th Brigade, whose three remaining battalions formed 14th Divisional Reserve. From R.23 to A.A.10 the line was held by the 9th Brigade, temporarily attached from the Ist Corps; and the 36th Brigade was concentrated near Besouia.

General Marshall had at his disposal, to support his operations, three 6-inch howitzers, eight 60-pounders, twenty-four 4·5-inch howitzers and sixty-eight 18-pounders, or a total of 103 guns and howitzers; † and artillery bombardments had been carried out for some days previous to the 25th January.

On the 25th January the artillery support of the assault was to include counter-battery work, bombardment, barrage and blocking of points in rear of the enemy's front line.‡ An intense bombardment was to commence at 9.30 a.m. and to continue throughout the assault, the barrage in front and on both flanks of the assaulting infantry lifting as they advanced.

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* The 38th Brigade, with the 72nd Field Company, R.E., " B " Stokes Mortar Battery, 135th Trench Mortar Battery and one mortar 137th Trench Mortar Battery attached, was on the right of the 13th Division, holding about two thousand three hundred yards of front. On its left, holding the line as far as the Hai, a frontage of about one thousand four hundred yards, was the 40th Brigade, with the 88th Field Company, 8th Welch Pioneers and 137th Trench Mortar Battery (less one mortar) attached. The 39th Brigade held the line west of the Hai, a frontage of about seven hundred yards, with the 71st Field Company (less one section), " G " Stokes Mortar Battery and the 136th Trench Mortar Battery attached; and on the extreme left was the 35th Brigade with the 138th Trench Mortar Battery attached.

† 4th and 13th Brigades, R.F.A.=36; 55th and 66th Brigades, R.F.A. =32; 134th Brigade, R.F.A.=12; A/69th and C/69th Batteries, R.F.A. =8; 157th Battery, R.G.A.=4; 2/104th Battery, R.G.A.=4; 72nd Battery, R.G.A.=4; and 159th Siege Battery=3. One four-gun 18-pounder battery was to support the south-western flank of the 14th Division.

‡ Considerations of artillery ammunition supply generally limited the use of guns to cover an attack or resist a counter-attack.

The assault was to be delivered by the 40th and 39th Brigades, advancing at 9.40 a.m. on the east and west banks, respectively, of the Hai; their first objective being the line P.10.a.—P.15—P.12.a.—P.12.b.

Having captured and secured this line, these two brigades were to push on towards the next enemy line and at the same time to carry out bombing attacks to their right and left along the enemy's front trench.

The 38th Brigade on the right and the 35th Brigade on the left were to support the assault with a heavy mortar, machine gun and rifle fire and to co-operate in other ways as opportunity offered. They were also to be responsible for closing any gaps that occurred on the outer flanks of the assaulting brigades.

Any indications of weakness or withdrawal by the enemy were at once to be taken advantage of to secure ground up to the line N.14.m.—N.15.b.—P.10.c.—P.13.a.—P.16.

The 37th and 9th Brigades were to hold defensively the left flank and rear of the IIIrd Corps area; and the 36th Brigade would form Corps Reserve near the Besouia bridges.*

The Corps Cavalry† with two horse artillery guns were to patrol to the west and, with their guns in action southward of the Shumran bend, co-operate by opening fire on any hostile artillery or other suitable targets to the west of the Hai.

To carry out General Marshall's plan, outlined above, General Cayley, commanding the 13th Division, made detailed arrangements. The 40th Brigade, leaving one battalion to hold its front line, was to assault with two battalions, while its fourth battalion in brigade reserve was held ready to deal with any counter-attack. The 39th Brigade, with half a battalion holding its original front, was also to assault with two battalions, while the remainder of the brigade in reserve would be prepared to deal with any counter-attack. The 40th Brigade had about three hundred and fifty yards to cover before reaching the enemy's front line and the 39th Brigade rather more than that.

At 9.40 a.m. on the 25th January the 40th and 39th Brigades commenced their attack, each advancing in four waves. The 8th Royal Welch Fusiliers (on the right) and the 5th Wiltshire were the assaulting battalions in the 40th Brigade; and the

* There were four bridges over the Hai in the IIIrd Corps area at this time; two at Besouia, one to the east at S.9 and one at Atab.

† From the 2nd January to the 4th March, 1917, the IIIrd Corps Cavalry consisted of a composite cavalry regiment, comprising two squadrons 32nd Lancers, one squadron 10th Lancers and the squadron 1/1st Hertfordshire Yeomanry.

9th Worcestershire (on the right) and the 7th North Staffordshire in the 39th Brigade. All four battalions got within fifty yards of the enemy's line under cover of the bombardment and then, as the artillery fire lifted, penetrated the enemy's trench line.

By 10 a.m. the Welch Fusiliers and Wiltshire had secured the enemy line P.10.a.—P.15.a. and proceeded to consolidate it and to push bombers eastward along the enemy's front line, while the Welch Pioneers commenced the construction of communication trenches in rear. The casualties in this part of the assaulting force had not been severe.

The 39th Brigade met with more opposition and incurred considerable casualties, especially among the North Staffordshire; but by 10 a.m. they and the Worcestershire had gained their objective (P.15—P.12.a.—P.12.b.) and had begun to consolidate. The enemy, however, appeared to be massing to the north for a counter-attack; and this started in earnest about 11 a.m. Supported by a heavy shrapnel fire and the effective fire of a trench mortar that could not be located, the enemy, with a plentiful supply of bombs, pushed on with great determination. For a time the North Staffordshire, supported by artillery, rifle, mortar * and machine gun fire, held the enemy off, but were gradually driven back on to the Worcestershire and the situation became critical.

At 11.30 a.m., when the 9th Royal Warwickshire were ordered forward to restore the situation, nearly the whole of the assaulting line was falling back; but by a gallant advance the Warwickshire, under the fine leadership of their commander, Lieutenant-Colonel E. E. D. Henderson (who was killed),† pushed through the retiring troops and, followed immediately by them, regained the whole of the first objective. By 12 noon the enemy counter-attack had been definitely driven back with heavy loss.

At 1 p.m. General Marshall ordered his Corps Reserve (36th Brigade) to move to the vicinity of Kala Haji Fahan in readiness to support the 39th Brigade, which had suffered severe casualties and was faced by Turks in considerable strength three hundred yards to its front. The artillery support of this brigade had been excellent, but the trench it held was so congested that consolidation had been impeded; and all attempts to extend its left by bombing had failed.

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* "G" Stokes Mortar Battery is mentioned as doing excellent work. Of its eight mortars, seven were put out of action during the day.

† He was awarded a posthumous V.C. for this action.

Some two hours later, under cover of intense artillery fire from the north-west, the Turks again counter-attacked the 39th Brigade, and gradually drove it back till all the three battalions engaged had been forced back to their own original front line. This was just before 4 p.m.

At 4.35 p.m. General Egerton (14th Division) was placed in command of all troops west of the Hai, except the Corps Cavalry and 9th Brigade, and was instructed to organise the recapture by 7 p.m. of part of the first objective, i.e., P.15—P.12.a. Owing, however, to the congestion of the communication trenches with wounded, etc., it was found impossible to get fresh troops up in time; and the operation was postponed till next day.

In the meantime the 40th Brigade east of the Hai had gained more ground, both eastwards and to its front, where it had established a footing in the enemy's second line. The Turks had made two counter-attacks, but both were broken up by our supporting artillery fire; and by nightfall the 40th Brigade had consolidated the line P.10.b.—P.10.p.—P.10.r.—P.10.n.—P.10.s.—P.15.a.

The casualties in the IIIrd Corps during the day totalled 1,135, of which 788 were incurred by the three battalions of the 39th Brigade engaged on the west bank. On the east bank of the Hai, where the two battalions of the 40th Brigade incurred some 200 casualties, we captured over 100 prisoners, a machine gun and three trench mortars and buried over 400 dead Turks. On the west bank we captured one machine gun, though we lost three ourselves; and it was evident that the Turks, who were in strength, must have lost heavily there also. The commanders of both infantry brigades testified to the effective support they had received from the artillery.

That night, as a result of information obtained during and after the fighting, the Turkish dispositions were estimated to be as follows:—

Sannaiyat ..	7th and 9th Regiments (51st Division).	About 3,000 rifles.
	One battalion, 167th Regiment (4th Division).	About 750 rifles.
Sannaiyat—Kut river bank.	Three battalions, 167th Regiment (4th Division).	About 2,300 rifles.
Khudhaira Fort	2/43rd Regiment (52nd Division)	About 500 rifles.
Hai Salient:—		
East bank ..	40th Regiment (52nd Division) ..	About 1,500 rifles.
	One company, 3/3rd Regiment (45th Division).	About 125 rifles.
	Two companies, 1/156th Regiment (4th Division).	About 350 rifles (in reserve).

West bank ..	3rd Regiment (less one company) (45th Division).	About 1,375 rifles.
	3/156th Regiment (4th Division) ..	About 500 rifles.
	141st Regiment (45th Division) ..	About 1,500 rifles.
	Two companies 1/156th Regiment (4th Division).	About 350 rifles (in reserve).
	142nd Regiment (45th Division) ..	About 1,500 rifles (in reserve at Liquorice Factory).
Massag trenches	1/43rd Regiment (52nd Division)	About 500 rifles.
Left bank, Tigris	3/43rd Regiment (52nd Division)	About 500 rifles.
In reserve, Dahra	2/156th Regiment (4th Division) ..	About 700 rifles.
Husaini Bend ..	Two companies	About 250 rifles.
Bughaila ..	One depot regiment	Number uncertain.
		Total over 15,700.

According to this, the Turks had about 2,000 rifles holding the east bank of the Hai and rather over 5,000 rifles holding the west bank, including reserves. But according to Muhammad Amin, their actual numbers were less than this. Two regiments of the 4th Division had arrived, but there was as yet no indication of the 10th, the third regiment. There is no mention in any of the available Turkish accounts of the Depot Regiment; but the British had several reports confirming its presence at Bughaila and its constitution of local conscripts from Mosul. There was no indication of the presence of any of the 14th Division, which was still reported by the Russians * to be in the line opposite them in Armenia.

Except for a weak Turkish counter-attack against the left of the 40th Brigade, which was easily driven back by the Wiltshire, the night 25th/26th January passed quietly.

The 36th Brigade, which General Egerton had detailed to carry out the assault on the west of the Hai at 9.40 a.m. on the 26th, relieved the 39th Brigade during the night. At 8 a.m. on the 26th, however, it was found necessary to postpone the commencement of the assault for an hour for completion of the necessary preliminary arrangements † "G" Stokes mortar, and the 136th Trench mortar, batteries were attached to the 36th Brigade, whose assault was to be supported and assisted by the 35th Brigade and Corps Cavalry in the same way as on the 25th.

* In justice to the Russians it must be pointed out that as their lines were separated by two or three miles of deep snow from those of the Turks, they were almost entirely dependent on deserters for identification of units opposing them; and they had not discovered that the 12th Regiment of the 14th Division had been transferred to another division.

† One cause of delay was that the 36th Brigade used Mark VI rifle ammunition while the 39th Brigade used Mark VII. Reconnaissance and distribution of bombs, etc., also took time.

At 10.35 a.m. the British artillery opened an intense bombardment and five minutes later the 82nd Punjabis moved forward to the assault; and by 10.50 a.m. had gained possession of the Turkish line P.15—P.12.a. at the cost of a good many casualties. Consolidation was started at once and bombing parties were sent along the trenches towards P.15.b. and P.12.b.; and then the Turkish guns from the north-west opened fire.

About 11.30 a.m. the 26th Punjabis were sent forward to support the 82nd, and to prolong the left of their line. Owing to the detachment of large fatigue parties, the 26th were only about 400 strong; but in spite of considerable casualties their two companies on the right joined the 82nd at P.15 and P.12.a. Their two other companies, however, missed their direction and, trending towards their left, advanced across the open for about fifteen hundred yards and established themselves in the Turkish trench at P.16. In this advance they suffered heavy casualties, including their commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel I. F. R. Thompson; but for two hours or more they maintained the position they had won and repelled three enemy counter-attacks. Then, beginning to run short of ammunition, they moved down the Turkish trench line and at about 2.15 p.m. joined up with the rest of their battalion.

Shortly after this the Turks started another counter-attack, but it was beaten back by the 26th and 82nd Punjabis reinforced by two companies 1/4th Hampshire and with the effective assistance of their supporting artillery. General Egerton now issued orders for the gap between P.12.b. and P.21.b., i.e., between the left of the 36th and the right of the 35th Brigade, to be connected up and held by the 35th Brigade; and this was completed before daybreak next day. Consolidation of the line captured and the construction of communication trenches was also continued; and after dark the 1/4th Hampshire took over the front line from the 26th and 82nd Punjabis. These two battalions, which had displayed great gallantry and had suffered severe casualties,* were then withdrawn to the rear.

On the east of the Hai there had been no severe fighting during the day and the 40th Brigade, by bombing operations, had extended its front for about four hundred yards eastward along the Turkish first line.

* The 26th had incurred 237 and the 82nd 225 casualties.

The night passed quietly, the Turks making little attempt to interfere with the British digging operations. On the British left a patrol of the 37th Dogras (35th Brigade) under Captain B. I. Jones, passing through the Turkish piquet line, reached the enemy's wire at N.31, where it found the trenches to be held in strength.

The morning of the 27th January was clear and frosty and during the day the 36th Brigade, supported by artillery fire, carried out three successful advances, capturing as many lines of trench; and by dark had occupied the line P.14.b.—P.12.m. East of the Hai, the 40th Brigade, meeting only slight opposition, also extended its front to include the line P.8.c.—P.10.q.—P.15.c. The total casualties for the day in the IIIrd Corps amounted to 135, of which the bulk had been incurred by the 1/4th Hampshire.

The 28th January was, comparatively speaking, a quiet day. East of the Hai, the 13th Division occupied, with no great difficulty, the whole of the Turkish first and second lines; and west of the Hai the 14th Division made secure the ground it had gained, and straightened the front of the 35th Brigade to prolong the left of the 36th Brigade. The total casualties in the two divisions during the day amounted to 41. By evening it appeared as if the enemy had withdrawn his main strength to the line N.14.g.—N.16.f.—P.10.f.—P.13.b.—N.31; and after dark the 37th Brigade took over the front from the 36th Brigade, while the 9th Brigade took over some of the western trenches hitherto held by the 35th and 37th Brigades.

General Marshall now came to the conclusion that he was unlikely to obtain immediately decisive results on the east bank of the Hai, where, moreover, further progress might place his troops in a dangerous re-entrant, commanded by Kut, the Liquorice Factory * and the Turkish trenches along the west bank of the Hai; and he decided, with General Maude's approval, that his next step should be the capture of the line P.13.b.—N.32. To carry out this plan he decided to consolidate and to extend somewhat, during the night 28th/29th, the positions already gained on both banks of the Hai, and on the 29th to move forward his guns in closer support to positions from which they would register. On the night 29th/30th these new artillery positions would be fully manned and the infantry positions further consolidated and developed.

* Spoken of in Volume II. as Woolpress Village. It appears that the press there was used both for wool and for liquorice.

On the 29th January the 37th Brigade, encountering opposition, established strong piquets along a dry water channel and enemy trenches on the line P.13.a.—P.16; while the 13th Division to the east of the Hai continued consolidation and pushed forward slightly in places. The artillery registered from their new positions; the 39th Brigade became Corps Reserve, concentrating at R.19 west of the Hai; and some squadrons from the Cavalry Division, which had moved some thirty-six hours previously from Arab Village to near Besouia, reconnoitred to the west and north-west. The IIIrd Corps casualties during the day totalled 140, mostly incurred by the 37th Brigade.

During the night 29th/30th the artillery completed the occupation of their new positions; the 35th Brigade connected up its line with the left of the 37th Brigade, i.e., from P.19.a. to P.16; and the 37th Brigade piquets, under heavy and continuous fire from snipers, continued to strengthen their new line. The 30th January was cloudy and threatening, a strong south-westerly wind interfering considerably with artillery registration; and consolidation and preparations for the assault on the 1st February continued. The day's casualties in the IIIrd Corps totalled 56. At 11 p.m. rain began to fall heavily and continued till 6 a.m. on the 31st, which turned out to be a stormy day; but preparations for the assault continued, including wire-cutting by the artillery. The casualties only amounted to 23.

At 1 p.m. on the 31st January General Maude issued an operation order,* in which he gave his intention "to make further progress in driving the enemy from the trenches which he still occupies on both banks of the Hai south-west of Kut." His estimate of the Turkish dispositions about Kut and west of a north and south line through Kut were :—

(*a*) East of the Hai, Tigris right bank—900 rifles.

(*b*) West of the Hai, Tigris right bank—3,600 rifles and 12 guns.

(*c*) Kut and Shumran peninsulas—1,000 rifles, 90 sabres, 36 guns.

(*d*) Dahra bend, Tigris right bank—300 rifles.

(*e*) Shumran to Bughaila—1,100 rifles, 210 sabres, 6 guns.

Assaults on the enemy's trenches on both banks of the Hai would be delivered on the 1st February under IIIrd Corps

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* As was his custom in these operations, General Maude only issued this order after he had discussed fully with General Marshall his plan and had seen and approved the latter's detailed orders for the assault.

arrangements. With these assaults the Cavalry Division, operating to the westward from about a mile north-west of the IIIrd Corps left, would co-operate.*

The Ist Corps was to be prepared to detail another infantry brigade † for temporary attachment to the IIIrd Corps. The 47th Sikhs, 59th Rifles and half No. 132 Machine Gun Company, all of the 8th Brigade, which had been in Army Reserve at Besouia since the 27th, would remain at General Maude's disposal till 4 p.m. on the 1st February, when they would again come under the orders of their brigade commander.

General Marshall's arrangements to carry out the assault were briefly as follows. East of the Hai the 40th Brigade, advancing at 9.50 a.m. from P.8.b.—P.9.c., was to capture the trench line N.16.a.—N.16.f.—N.16.d., which it would consolidate ; and it was then to bomb westward to the Hai, while the 38th Brigade bombed north-eastward to the Tigris. West of the Hai, the 37th Brigade, advancing at 12.10 p.m. from P.13.a.—P.16, was first to capture the double line of trenches P.13.m.—N.27.a. and then extend its gains by bombing up to N.28.a. ; and on its left, keeping pace with its advance, the 35th Brigade was to bomb its way from P.16 to N.32. The attacks on both banks would be supported by all the IIIrd Corps artillery ; and the 39th Brigade at R.19 would form Corps Reserve.

The 1st February, though misty in the early morning, turned out a fine, clear day. Preceded by an eight-minute intense artillery bombardment and then supported by a seventeen-minute artillery barrage in front and on both flanks and by massed machine gun fire on both flanks, the 8th Cheshire Regiment of the 40th Brigade, assaulting at 9.50 a.m., captured the line N.16.a.—N.16.f. with inconsiderable casualties ; and then bombing operations to right and left by the 38th and 40th Brigades commenced. About 12.30 p.m. the Turks attempted to make a counter-attack from the Gharaf Mounds, but this was broken up by our artillery fire. Meeting with little further opposition, the bombing operations of the 38th and 40th Brigades gave them possession, by 2.45 p.m., of the whole enemy line from the Tigris to the Hai (Ruin—P.10.f.). Thus the 13th Division, with the assistance of our artillery and at the cost of about 70 casualties, inflicted severe loss on the enemy and took 170 prisoners, while it secured the last line but one of the defences east of the Hai.

* The Cavalry Division was not placed under Corps orders.
† The 8th Brigade was detailed.

The operations on the west of the Hai were not so successful, owing partly to the fact that the British preliminary preparations had not been quite completed, especially in regard to work on the communication trenches.* After ten minutes' intense artillery bombardment, the 45th and 36th Sikhs of the 37th Brigade advanced to the assault at 12.10 p.m., the 45th moving on the right in eight waves and the 36th in four waves, on frontages of two hundred and sixty and two hundred yards respectively. Immediately on emerging from the front line trench, both battalions came under very heavy enfilade artillery and machine gun fire from the north-west and from their left front. The 45th managed without great loss to capture both the first and second Turkish lines of trench; but the 36th, being more exposed, suffered such heavy losses that in spite of most gallant efforts they could get no farther than the enemy's first line, which they found only lightly held.† The Turks then launched against both battalions a heavy counter-attack‡ which the advanced portions of the 45th Sikhs tried to repel as it got to close quarters by a gallant charge across the open. But although they, the 36th Sikhs and our supporting artillery caused the enemy severe losses, the 45th also suffered very heavily; and over-weighted by numbers the remnants of both Sikh battalions were driven back by 1.30 p.m. to their original starting point.

The bombing attack of the 35th Brigade on the left had been definitely checked by hostile machine gun fire; and the 1/4th Devonshire and 1/2nd Gurkhas, ordered, at 1.10 p.m., to send forward two companies each to assist the Sikhs, had been unable to get their men forward in time owing to congestion of the front line and communication trenches by the wounded of the 36th and 45th Sikhs. Attempts to organise a fresh attack by the Devons and Gurkhas also failed owing to this congestion; and these two battalions remained in the front line, supported by the 1/4th Hampshire and 62nd Punjabis (36th Brigade), who were temporarily attached to the 37th Brigade to replace the 36th and 45th Sikhs withdrawn to the rear.

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* For this reason the 14th Division and IIIrd Corps commanders wished to postpone the assault for twenty-four hours, but the Army Commander overruled them on strategical grounds.

† Edmund Candler in the "Long Road to Baghdad" gives a more detailed account of the 36th Sikhs' advance, showing what he was able to gather locally at the time from the few survivors.

‡ This seems to have started just before 12.30 p.m.

As the commanding officer of the 1/4th Devonshire wrote to the wounded commandant of the 36th Sikhs, they and the 45th had set to the brigade an example which its other battalions would find difficult to live up to. Out of a total of 17 British officers, 30 Indian officers and 1,180 other ranks actually engaged in the two battalions, 16 British officers, 28 Indian officers and 988 other ranks had become casualties. These casualties speak for themselves. Some three weeks later, General Maude specially addressed the 36th and 45th Sikhs, then on their way to Amara to reorganise, to express his admiration of the magnificent fighting qualities they had displayed, which, he said, had paved the way for, and contributed greatly to, the ultimate success achieved on the 15th February.

The Cavalry Division, operating towards Shumran, had captured during the day a few prisoners; a British aeroplane had shot down a *Fokker* which crashed from 7,000 feet; and our artillery sank two Turkish ferry boats crossing the Tigris near Kut. The total IIIrd Corps' casualties for the 1st February, including 66 in the 8th Cheshire and those in the Sikh battalions mentioned above, amounted to 1,273.

During the night 1st/2nd February the 8th Brigade took over the captured Turkish line on the east of the Hai from the 38th and 40th Brigades, who withdrew preparatory to moving to the west of the Hai, where General Marshall planned to attack on a broad front by bringing up the 13th Division on the left of the 14th Division.

It had been intended that the 14th Division should renew its attack west of the Hai on the 2nd. But the morning was misty, hampering artillery observation, and the 14th Division found that it required more time for getting its trench mortars and machine guns into position. The attack was therefore postponed for twenty-four hours.

At midday on the 2nd General Maude issued orders for the IIIrd Corps to secure with piquets, during the ensuing night, a line extending from P.19 north-westwards to the Tigris, so as to enclose the Turks in the Dahra bend; and for the Cavalry Division to move out at 7 p.m. with a view to shelling the enemy's advanced base at Imam Mahdi and to damaging as much as possible the enemy's communications in the neighbourhood of Bughaila. The Cavalry Division, which was to be accompanied by six pontoons for use if needed, was to withdraw towards the Hai when its mission had been completed on the 3rd.

The 35th Brigade experienced little difficulty in occupying the line P.19—N.38, the portion allotted to it ; but the 39th Brigade, detailed to take up the line N.38—M.27—M.32, and the 40th Brigade, detailed to take up the line M.32—Q.28, met with considerable opposition from a Turkish force found in occupation of an eight-foot bank running east and west in the intervening space.* By daybreak on the 3rd February, the leading battalions of the 39th and 40th Brigades had established an irregular line of piquets opposite this bank and within about two hundred yards of it. On the right of the 39th Brigade, the Gloucestershire, one of whose companies incurred considerable casualties during the night, had reached a point about one thousand yards north-west of N.38. About eight hundred yards south-west of them were the piquets of the Warwicks and on their left again were the piquets of the Welch Fusiliers of the 40th Brigade. The 39th and 40th Brigades held this line throughout the daylight hours of the 3rd and at 5.15 p.m. they were ordered to withdraw after dark to the line P.27—Q.28.† This was accomplished without incident. The casualties incurred by these two brigades during the previous twenty-four hours totalled about 100, of which the northernmost piquet of the Welch Fusiliers contributed 20, or 40 per cent. of its strength, including the battalion commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel A. Hay.

In the meantime the 14th Division had carried out its renewed assault west of the Hai. The orders were generally on the same lines as those for the 1st February. But a heavier artillery flank barrage was arranged to deal with hostile enfilading fire from the west ; the frontage to be assaulted was reduced, i.e., to P.13.b.—N.27 ; the 8th Brigade was instructed to support the attack by an enfilading machine gun fire from P.10.f. ; and it was thought that the 13th Division operations on the left might make the Turks apprehensive of their communications.

At 10.40 a.m., after ten minutes' intense artillery bombardment, the 1/2nd Gurkhas (on the right) on a frontage of one hundred and eighty yards and the 1/4th Devonshire on a

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* Numerous dry water channels running south-eastward from the Shumran bend to this bank gave the Turks facilities for reinforcing.

† This withdrawal is said to have been ordered by General Maude on General Marshall's representation. The latter was of opinion that it would facilitate the inevitable Tigris crossing if as many Turks as possible were first killed on the Tigris right bank ; and he therefore considered it would be a mistake at this stage to enclose the Turks in the Dahra bend and prevent them sending over further reinforcements from the Tigris left bank.

frontage of one hundred and fifty yards, each battalion in eight waves, advanced to the assault with great dash; and within ten minutes they had captured the two Turkish trench lines which formed their objective. The Turks could be seen in great strength at N.27.a.; and at 11 a.m. two companies 62nd Punjabis and four machine guns were pushed up to support the Devons' left. Several enemy counter-attacks were broken up by our artillery and rifle fire; and by 1 p.m. the whole of the 62nd Punjabis had reinforced the Devons and Gurkhas.

In the meantime, heavy machine gun fire had definitely checked the bombing advance of the 35th Brigade at P.16.a., from which point for a little distance northward the Turks appear to have filled in the trench.* Bombing parties from the Gurkhas, Devons and 62nd Punjabis now began, however, to advance on their right towards N.24.b. and on their left towards N.27.a. and N.28, though in the latter direction the network of small trenches made progress slow. At about 6 p.m., a company of the 1/4th Hampshire moved up to the left of our front line, which by nightfall † had established itself on the right near N.24.b. and on the left near N.27.a.; and after dark, the 1/5th Buffs of the 35th Brigade linked up their line with the left of the 37th Brigade with piquets (P.16—N.27).

East of the Hai, the 8th Brigade, in addition to supporting with enfilade machine gun fire the assault of the 37th Brigade, was actively engaged throughout the day in bombing and patrol advances. But the Turks remaining on that bank still offered stubborn resistance and even attempted to counter-attack.

The Cavalry Division, which had left Besouia at 7 p.m. on the 2nd February, had reached a point about eight miles south of Imam Mahdi by dawn on the 3rd and, leaving a detachment there, reached the vicinity of Imam Mahdi about noon. Its progress had been much delayed by numerous deep water channels, by ploughed ground and by the difficulty of maintaining direction; but the pontoons had not been required as the Husainiya canal was found to be dry. Some slight opposition was encountered, but there were no signs of any enemy depot at Imam Mahdi; and after engaging

* During their retirements in these operations the Turks frequently filled in trenches which would afford us a covered and bombing approach to their new line.

† Sunset was about 5.35 p.m.

with effect a Turkish gunboat and, in the absence of any other target, firing on some enemy river craft about two miles below Bughaila, the Cavalry Division withdrew and bivouacked at about 6.30 p.m. near Tel Bismai. It had only suffered two casualties and had captured three prisoners.

British casualties on the 2nd and 3rd February in the IIIrd Corps (including 8th Brigade) totalled 945, of which the 37th Brigade incurred 728* on the 3rd. But the results had been very satisfactory. The Turkish casualties were undoubtedly heavy; in addition to the losses sustained in their counter-attacks, a large number of their dead were found in the captured trenches. Writing home that day, General Maude expressed the definite opinion that during the recent operations the Turkish losses had been heavier than ours. He also said that their long-expected reinforcements did not seem to be arriving, that their guns were fewer than ours † and that they seemed to be short of ammunition, as they did not reply with any spirit to our intense bombardments.

On the evening of the 3rd February, General Egerton issued instructions for the 8th Brigade to patrol boldly to its front during the night and for the 37th Brigade to bomb forward next day and, without getting seriously engaged, gain as much ground as possible. There was much hostile rifle fire on both the 8th and 37th Brigade fronts after dark, but it died down about midnight; and the reason for this seemed clear when at 5.15 a.m.‡ on the 4th a report from the 8th Brigade reached 14th Division headquarters saying that the Turks had evacuated the whole of the east bank of the Hai. About an hour later General Egerton ordered the 37th and 35th Brigades to patrol boldly to the north and north-west and to push forward troops if the patrols found that the enemy had withdrawn. This proved to be the case; and by noon our patrols had reached the line N.21.a.—N.30—P.18. The Turks seemed to be holding a line from the Liquorice Factory westward towards the southern end of the Shumran bend.

Hearing of this withdrawal, General Maude came to the conclusion that the Turks might intend a complete evacuation of the Tigris right bank and possibly a retirement on the left bank also; and at 8.55 a.m. he ordered the Cavalry Division, near Tel Bismai, to reconnoitre and ascertain whether the

* 1/4th Devonshire	..	283	1/4th Hampshire	..	64
62nd Punjabis ..	..	192	1/2nd Gurkhas ..	..	189

† At this time the number of guns with the Turks was estimated at 79, including two 12 c.m. howitzers recently arrived.

‡ Sunrise was about 6.50 a.m.

enemy had withdrawn from the right bank at the Shumran bend. He also issued orders for the Mobile Bridging Train to be ready to move. Moving off at 11.30 a.m., the cavalry ascertained that the enemy still had troops on the right bank close to the western arm of the Shumran bend and for some little distance along the Massag canal, but none to the west of those positions. During the day the cavalry had 36 casualties and among the prisoners captured were three belonging to the 10th Regiment, i.e., the third regiment of the reorganised 4th Turkish Division. Casualties totalled only 42 in the IIIrd Corps.

In an operation order issued at 5.10 p.m. General Marshall said that the enemy was believed to be holding the line Liquorice Factory—M.15.b—N.43.a and thence westward. With the object of continuing a vigorous offensive, the IIIrd Corps was to occupy the following positions west of the Hai: the 14th Division was to secure the line N.19—N.20.a—N.20.g—N.41—N.30 and to push north-eastward to the Tigris as opportunity offered, while the east bank of the Hai mouth and the Tigris bank to N.12 were to be held defensively; the 13th Division was to secure the line from N.30 through N.35 to N.38 and from there to hold the line P.27—Q.23—Q.28, relieving the 14th Division where necessary; and the 9th Brigade was to remain on the line Q.28—S.16—A.A.10. The new lines were to be held aggressively and constant pressure on the enemy was to be maintained by patrols. The 14th Division was to detail two battalions of the 8th Brigade as Corps Reserve; and a special programme was issued for artillery redistribution during the ensuing night and for registration next day.

In accordance with these orders, the advanced line of the IIIrd Corps had established itself by daybreak on the 5th February on the following line. East of the Hai, from N.12 to the Hai mouth was held defensively by the 8th Brigade (less two battalions); west of the Hai, the 36th Brigade occupied approximately the line N.19—N.20—N.41—N.30, whence the 38th Brigade continued to N.35—N.38—P.27—Q.23 and from there the 40th Brigade held to Q.28. The 36th Brigade had relieved the 37th Brigade, reduced by the withdrawal of the 36th and 45th Sikhs to a strength of two battalions; and the 38th had relieved the 35th Brigade, withdrawn to form 14th Divisional Reserve.

The operations against the Hai salient, which may be said to have concluded with the Turkish withdrawal on the night

3rd/4th February, brought the total of the British casualties incurred since the 13th December up to 8,524, including 2,079 killed and missing. The Turks had also lost very heavily in this period. We had buried 2,006 of their dead* and had taken 579 prisoners; and General Maude estimated that their total losses in killed, wounded and prisoners must amount to well over 10,000. Great credit for the results so far achieved was due, said General Maude in his progress report, to Generals Cobbe and Marshall and to their subordinate commanders, while he also extolled the stubborn determination and fighting spirit of their troops, as well as the co-operation of all arms.

Obtaining reliable information that the Turks, who already had eight 5·9-inch German howitzers on the Tigris, were about to be reinforced by a battery of 8·8-inch howitzers and probably another of 5·9-inch howitzers, General Maude had telegraphed to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff asking for any number up to three batteries of modern 6-inch howitzers equipped with caterpillar tractors; and he now heard that the War Office would despatch these and that their personnel would embark from the United Kingdom on the 12th February.†

At the end of January the Chief of the Imperial General Staff heard from the British *liaison* officer there that the commander of the Russian Caucasus Army had formed a plan of operations for the near future which appeared to contemplate the capture of Mosul, Samarra and Baghdad. Baratoff, reinforced by several cavalry divisions and some infantry, was, after reorganisation and preparation, to occupy in force the line Sehneh—Kangavar—Burujird and prepare for a further advance, while a large cavalry force would be concentrated about Sehneh on his right to advance against the flank and rear of the Turkish army in Mesopotamia, in conjunction with an advance by the force under Chernozuboff towards Mosul.‡ Operations were also intended against the Turkish Second Army, i.e., to the right of Chernozuboff. The date of the commencement of Baratoff's and Chernozuboff's operations was still uncertain, but it seemed likely that it would be early in March, while the operations against the Turkish Second Army would probably be later than this, owing to climatic reasons.

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* They themselves had buried many others.

† The Chief of the Imperial General Staff had first asked for an assurance, which General Maude gave him, that these howitzers could be utilised during the coming flood season.

‡ Chernozuboff's force was opposite Ruwandiz approximately.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff at once replied saying that the British attached great importance to these proposed operations, which promised far-reaching results. It was intended, he said, to keep up the pressure about Kut so as to draw Turkish troops away from the Russian front; and General Maude had inflicted severe casualties on the Turks, who had already reinforced their Tigris force with one division and seemed to have more *en route* there.* The date of the Russian offensive was very important, as the flood season beginning at the end of March would hamper General Maude's operations and make it doubtful if he could maintain much pressure on the enemy. Baratoff's operations should, therefore, be fully developed before this time. Sir William Robertson did not propose to tell General Maude of the Russian intentions till the dates were fixed so as to avoid leakage of information, but it was important that he himself should receive timely warning to enable him to arrange co-operation by General Maude to the fullest extent.

Four days later, i.e., on the 3rd February, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff telegraphed to General Maude that if the Russians obtained considerable successes in Asia that spring it was possible that the Turkish resistance on the Tigris would be so weakened that General Maude would be able to advance on Baghdad; and if this could be recommended on military grounds H.M. Government might desire him to occupy Baghdad. Sir William Robertson, therefore, asked what force General Maude considered his communications could maintain at Baghdad in say two months' time; but at the same time the Chief of the Imperial General Staff warned General Maude that this question was intended merely to gain information regarding a point on which Sir William Robertson was in doubt and did not imply any change for the present in General Maude's instructions.

When this telegram was sent, the War Office had received reliable information that Halil Pasha had been for some weeks past demanding ammunition and reinforcements from Djemal Pasha, commanding the Turkish forces in Syria, on the grounds that the British on the Tigris were in force and that Halil

* The determination shown by the Turks in endeavouring to retain their footing on the right bank of the Tigris seemed to show the great value they attached to these positions, both to protect their line of communications and to enable them to counter-attack when reinforced, and to re-establish their position on the Hai. It, therefore, seemed probable to the British General Staff that the Turks were expecting further reinforcements on the Tigris.

might have to retire; but that Djemal had refused to give much assistance, possibly owing to the fact that another Turkish offensive against the Suez canal, backed by Austro-German troops, was said to be imminent. It is to be noted that, according to available information from Turkish sources, Halil's statements to Djemal were not in accordance with reports he was sending at the same time to Turkish Headquarters.*

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff had scarcely sent his telegram to General Maude when he heard from the British *liaison* officer with the Russian Caucasus Army that, owing to heavy snowfall, the Russian operations in Armenia were not likely to commence before mid-April and that Baratoff's operations would be delayed by the fact that the Turks opposite him were said to be suffering from an epidemic resembling bubonic plague; as it would be necessary to ascertain what the nature of this epidemic really was so as to take measures to guard against infection before advancing.

About this time there was considerable discussion between London, India and Mesopotamia regarding the date of the withdrawal from Mesopotamia of the 13th British Division, which the Chief of the Imperial General Staff intended to send to Egypt. The Commander-in-Chief in India said at the end of January that thirteen new Indian battalions should reach Basra between the middle of March and the middle of May, and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff decided that ten of these with three unattached British battalions in Mesopotamia should form a division to relieve the 13th.† As the operations against the Dahra bend proceeded, however, it became clear that the date of withdrawal of the 13th Division must depend on the developments in Mesopotamia.‡

On the 6th February General Maude replied to Sir William Robertson's telegram of the 3rd. Giving the detail of the daily tonnage required and that which his river fleet could deliver, he estimated that by the 1st April he would be able to maintain at Baghdad one cavalry and three infantry divisions, without

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* See previous narrative, page 92.

† This was in accordance with the policy recommended by the Army Council in November 1916, of relieving as many white units as possible for service in the main theatres of war.

‡ It had now become clear to the War Office that the strength of the several British armies in the field could not be kept up to establishment during 1917. In the previous November they had informed H.M. Government that this would happen unless steps were taken at once to provide more men; but the measures taken in the meantime had proved inadequate.

taking into account the supplies obtainable locally. As these supplies were plentiful, he considered that the maintenance there of a fourth infantry division could be safely guaranteed.

In this connection it is to be noted that the conversion of the Qurna–Amara railway to metre-gauge had just started and that it was hoped to complete it by the middle of April; and great progress had been made with the expansion and reorganisation of the river transport. Owing to the experience gained, a rearrangement of duties between the Director of Inland Water Transport (Brigadier-General W. H. Grey) and the Director-General of Port Administration and River Conservancy (Sir G. C. Buchanan) had just been brought into operation, under which General Grey took over a number of new duties.*

General Maude about this time conceived the idea of effecting a surprise landing on the Kut peninsula; but as, in order to maintain secrecy, he only took General Money, his Chief General Staff Officer, into his confidence and there is no official record of his plan, his exact intentions are not quite certain. On the 4th February four motor-lighters, of which a number constructed for use in the Dardanelles operations had recently arrived, were ordered to be loaded up, each with two days' rations for 300 British troops "for special purpose in connection with operations." Next day General Maude sent for Captain F. V. B. Witts, commanding the mobile bridging train, and gave him orders to take soundings round the mouth of the Hai. The rest of the story is given by Captain (now Major) Witts in "The Royal Engineers Journal" of December

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* Brigadier-General Grey's work was now defined as:—

(*a*) Organisation and control of inland water transport fleet and personnel;

(*b*) management of port traffic and port craft other than sea-going, including the discharge of ocean steamers subject to the rules of the port;

(*c*) construction of dockyards, repair and construction yards, river-craft piers, buoying and lighting above the ocean port and of the Karun river; and

(*d*) control of navigation of river and river-craft pilots, also of river works as ordered from time to time.

Sir George Buchanan's duties as Director of Port Administration and Conservancy being:—

(i) Control of the ocean port and port personnel other than that of port craft;

(ii) port and river engineering works and river conservancy organisation, other than piers for river-craft, within the limits of the ocean port; and

(iii) such special engineering works as might be ordered from time to time.

1923. According to this officer, the motor-lighters were to run the gauntlet of Sannaiyat and the back defences and then enter the Hai, where landing parties were to embark and make a dash across the river. Captain Witts was told, he says, by General Maude to mention the matter to no one and to make his reports in private letters addressed to General Maude by name. The project was, however, not attempted as Captain Witts ultimately ascertained by sounding that it was impracticable * and it was found that the engine power of the motor-lighters only enabled them to make very slow progress against the Tigris stream in flood.

To return to the operations on the Tigris right bank. The enemy's line of defence across the Dahra bend ran westward from the Liquorice Factory towards the southern extremity of the Shumran bend. From the factory for about one and three-quarter miles westward the trenches were held in strength, but thence towards the Shumran bend the line was not continuous, being occupied by a series of detachments and outlying posts. The southern extremity and western arm of the Shumran bend were also covered by detachments entrenched on the right bank of the Tigris.

To minimise losses General Maude considered it necessary to proceed cautiously in approaching this defensive line. Suitable positions of assembly had to be occupied and entrenched, communication trenches had to be dug, new artillery positions to be taken up and artillery registration carried out. Consequently the IIIrd Corps were occupied from the 5th to the 8th February in these preparatory arrangements, which involved continuous pressure on the enemy, day and night, by vigorous patrolling and intermittent bombardment ; and during which many minor enterprises were undertaken, in which losses were inflicted on the enemy and advanced posts wrested from him. The actual plan of attack was drawn up by General Marshall and approved by General Maude.

On the 8th the strength of the Turkish force located in the Kut peninsula and west of it (i.e., excluding the troops east of it), was estimated at 410 sabres, 9,200 rifles and 66 guns, disposed as follows :—

(*a*) On the left bank of the Tigris in the Kut and Shumran peninsulas—200 sabres, 1,800 rifles and 46 guns.

* Brigadier-General W. H. Beach, the head of the Intelligence Branch, was asked by General Maude about this time veiled questions regarding the depth of water at the Hai mouth. Until General Beach saw Major Witts' article he had not understood the reason for General Maude's enquiries.

(*b*) On the right bank of the Tigris, Dahra and Shumran bends—6,500 rifles and 14 guns ; and

(*c*) between Shumran and Bughaila—right bank, 210 sabres, 400 rifles and 6 guns ; left bank, 500 rifles.

The advanced line of the British IIIrd Corps* on the 8th February ran roughly along the line N.19—N.20.g.—N.41—N.42—N.35, whence it bent back to the west-south-west. Of this line the 36th Brigade held from N.19 to 150 yards east of N.42, with the 35th and 37th Brigades in rear ; to the left of the 36th Brigade, the 38th Brigade of the 13th Division held the line as far as N.35, whence the 39th Brigade held the flank frontage of over four miles facing north-west and west (N.35—N.37—N.38—N.47.a.—P.29—Q.23—Q.28) ; while the 40th Brigade formed divisional reserve.

The 8th Brigade, still attached to the 14th Division, was, less two battalions, holding the Hai mouth on its eastern bank ; the 9th Brigade occupied a southerly arc from Q.28 to A.A.10, protecting the Corps rear west of the Hai ; and two battalions 8th Brigade near Besouia bridge formed Corps Reserve.

The four infantry brigades remaining with the Ist Corps still contained the enemy in his Sannaiyat position and watched the right Tigris bank from opposite Sannaiyat to near the Hai mouth.

Troops from the Tigris line of communication defences guarded the south flank of the Shaikh Saad—Atab railway.†

Decisive operations to clear the Dahra bend were to commence on the 9th February. In General Marshall's opinion the Turkish dispositions showed that they expected his main attack to fall on their left about the Liquorice Factory and he planned accordingly, i.e., to demonstrate strongly in this direction while pushing in his real attack farther westward. Preceded by an eight and a half minutes' intense artillery bombardment, commencing at 10 a.m., and supported during the assault and subsequent consolidation by a close artillery barrage to its front and flanks, a battalion of the 38th Brigade (13th Division) was to capture and consolidate the Turkish line from one hundred and fifty yards east of N.43.a. to N.44.c. ; and was then to gain ground by bombing forward and to both flanks. Its assault was to be further supported and co-operated with by the troops of the 14th Division on its right and by the

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* The fighting strength of the British army on the Tigris remained at a fairly constant figure of about 3,500 sabres, 45,000 rifles and 174 guns. (See Chapter XXIX, page 72.) Casualties were steadily replaced by drafts.

† The first train ran through to Atab on the 3rd February.

machine guns of the 39th Brigade on its left. At the same time, the 14th Division was to demonstrate strongly against the line Liquorice Factory—M.15.a., while the 39th Brigade, advancing to the north-west, was to capture and hold the line N.46.a.—N.46—N.47.

The IIIrd Corps cavalry were to operate on the outer flank west and north-west of P.29; and the Cavalry Division, advancing from near Tel Bismai and exercising pressure on the enemy south and west of the Shumran bend, was to create a diversion and, with the IIIrd Corps cavalry, hem in the Turks to prevent their withdrawal to the Tigris left bank.

On the 9th February the day broke fine, though the wind and clouds seemed to betoken rain. The 6th King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment, the battalion of the 38th Brigade detailed to make the assault, came under heavy shell fire from their right front as soon as they emerged from their trenches to traverse the 450 yards or so which separated them from the Turkish line. But their fine advance soon achieved its object; and, although their bombing parties to the front and flanks could make little progress in face of the stout opposition encountered, they held on tenaciously to what they had gained and beat off several Turkish counter-attacks. About 4 p.m., when N.42 and N.43.a. had been joined up by a communication trench,* the 6th South Lancashire were sent forward to reinforce them; and about 8 p.m. these two battalions had to beat off further strong Turkish counter-attacks, which were renewed intermittently till about 3 a.m. By daybreak on the 10th this advanced portion of the 38th Brigade had established itself securely along the line N.43.c.—N.43.a.—N.44.c. Though the Turks had apparently been deceived by General Marshall's plan, the opposition they had offered to the advance of the 38th Brigade had stood in the way of as great success as had been hoped for.

On the right, the 36th Brigade gave effective support with fire throughout the day; and in demonstrations against the Liquorice Factory and the trenches to its westward drew heavy enemy fire on itself. On the left, the 39th Brigade pushed forward small parties to the north-west, a company of the 9th Worcestershire ousting Turkish detachments in rapid succession from N.47.a., N.46 and N.46.a., killing many and capturing, in addition to thirty prisoners, a quantity of ammunition and trench stores. By about 11 a.m. the

* The former trench here had been filled in by the Turks before retirement.

Worcestershire were in entire possession of the line N.46.a.—N.46—N.47, at the loss to themselves of only four casualties. The rapid flight of the Turkish detachments in this area is said to have been due to the mirage, which magnified greatly the size of the attacking force. At 12.30 p.m. the 39th Brigade was told that the 9th Brigade was to extend its line to Q.23 thus relieving a battalion of the 39th; and in the afternoon the 39th Brigade commander received instructions to prolong his line after dark from N.46.a. to N.40 and establish a piquet line along the dry water channel running eastwards from that point. This was successfully accomplished by midnight.

Meanwhile, the IIIrd Corps cavalry, moving towards the southern extremity of the Shumran bend, had been able to make but little progress against entrenched enemy infantry; and to their left the Cavalry Division, operating towards the western arm of the Shumran bend, had been checked by enemy infantry entrenched to the south and west of the bend and by floods caused by the enemy cutting the Tigris banks. These floods had filled the Husainiya canal to a depth of about six feet and had swamped the country immediately to the east of it.

The total casualties on the 9th February in the IIIrd Corps amounted to 367, of which rather more than half had occurred in the 6th King's Own. But it seemed clear that the Turks had suffered more heavily than this, as over 200 of their dead had been found, and those only in trenches captured by the 38th Brigade.

General Marshall, evidently unaware that General Maude had other projects for crossing, for which Captain Witts was still carrying out reconnaissances between Maqasis and Kut and regarding which General Maude was consulting General Cobbe, also conceived the idea of effecting a surprise landing on the Kut peninsula. The details of his plan are not given in the records; but at 11.30 a.m. on the 9th February the mobile bridging train commander was warned to be prepared to row the 47th Sikhs in pontoons across the Tigris that night. Captain Witts, after reconnoitring the proposed site for the crossing (N.8) and also finding that the 47th Sikhs had no men who could row, recommended a twenty-four hour postponement of the project to allow of preparation; and General Marshall appears to have approved this, for on the 10th morning a hundred of the 47th Sikhs came down to the Hai for further rowing practice. It appears, however, that General Maude informed General Marshall that he did not agree to

the proposal, apparently hinting at the same time that he had other plans for crossing in his own mind. In any case the project was abandoned; and Captain Witts continued his reconnaissance for a crossing till the 15th February, when, owing to the success attained in the Dahra bend, he received orders to concentrate his bridging train on the west bank of the Hai near Besouia.

Some details of a plan for a crossing just above Sannaiyat are shown in a report * sent, on the 12th February, by General Cobbe to General Headquarters in reply to verbal instructions from General Maude, given apparently on the 8th. The latter's intention was that two infantry battalions should cross by night in four motor-lighters, moving from below Sannaiyat, and land, one battalion at Z.14 † and the other at Z.30, whence they were to move inland and secure the trench rectangle Z.14—F.38—F.48—Z.30. In the meantime the lighters would bring across two more battalions from near Bait Isa and subsequently as many more as General Cobbe could make available; and at the same time a boat bridge was to be constructed across the river.

General Cobbe reported that out of five infantry brigades,‡ he could make four, and possibly six, battalions available for the operation, supported by thirty field guns and howitzers firing from both banks of the river at ranges of three thousand five hundred to five thousand yards from F.38. Reconnaissance showed that the lighters could get alongside the left bank at Z.14, but not at Z.30, and would have to land the second battalion just below at Z.27. Having regard, however, to the opposition likely to be encountered and the intervals of time and distance between battalions landing at these two places, he advocated that, if the attempt were made, both the first two battalions should land at Z.14 and the second two battalions at Z.27. He had found a suitable site for a bridge a short way upstream of Z.14.

The enemy's position at Sannaiyat was known to consist of five parallel and adjacent lines of trench, of which the first two lines constituted a first position and the last three lines a second position; while it seemed probable, said General Cobbe, that the Turks had recently prepared a third position in addition to those at Nukhailat and Suwada. But, for lack

* No other record of this plan is traceable.

† On the 4th February some Ist Corps piquets had reported that the enemy's posts on the left bank here seemed to have been withdrawn.

‡ Apparently one of the brigades temporarily attached to the IIIrd Corps was to return to Ist Corps for this operation.

of recent aeroplane observation, he was uncertain about this. Of the 3,400 Turkish rifles estimated to be holding Sannaiyat, two-thirds were believed to be equally divided between the first and second positions, with the remaining third in bivouacs about a mile north of the proposed landing places.

The river was known, continued General Cobbe, to be carefully watched by the Turks, whose guns were well sited and had probably registered on the stretch of river which the motor-lighters would have to traverse and on which they would come into the enemy's view after passing the bend north-west of Abu Rumman, from which point it would take them approximately three-quarters of an hour and one and a half hours to reach Z.14 and Z.27 respectively. Although our artillery had destroyed the wire in front of the first Sannaiyat position, that in front of the second and possible third positions was still intact and would form an effective obstacle to our rushing all these positions. General Cobbe consequently estimated that the Turks had about 1,000 rifles within a mile of the proposed landing places, whom they could use, without reducing the strength of the first two Sannaiyat positions, to oppose the landing, of which he expected them to receive timely intimation. These 1,000 rifles could, he considered, be reinforced by an infantry battalion from Suwada within two or three hours, though further reinforcements were not likely to arrive for eight hours, if then.

The final conclusion that General Cobbe came to was that, as an isolated operation, with the number of troops and guns available, the chance of success was not commensurate with the risk involved. The objective chosen, he considered, was too close to Sannaiyat for an isolated operation and was too far from it for a combined operation, for which also the number of troops and guns was insufficient.

General Cobbe concluded by suggesting that the proposed operation might be very valuable following immediately on the capture of the enemy's two positions at Sannaiyat, as part of a future general plan of operations on the left bank.

General Maude in acknowledging General Cobbe's report said that he did not agree with it, but as he had other schemes in his mind * and the IIIrd Corps operations were progressing well, he might not require to carry this plan out.

* It has been suggested by some senior officers who served under General Maude at this time that he had no real intention of attempting the crossings mentioned, but, rather, hoped that the reconnaissances made for these crossings would be noticed by and would mislead the Turks.

To return to the operations in the Dahra bend. During the night 9th/10th February the 35th Brigade took over the left of the 36th Brigade line, i.e., westward from N.20.a.; and the 38th Brigade bent back its front from N.44.c., through N.35 and towards N.37, to the point on the water channel between N.33 and N.40 where the 39th Brigade right piquet rested. The 39th line ran thence via N.40—N.46—N.47—N.47.a.—P.29 to Q.23, which was the right flank of the 9th Brigade.

Strong winds throughout the 10th February raised clouds of dust, which greatly obscured the view; but after an artillery bombardment about 7 a.m. the 38th Brigade started to bomb its way forward and to both flanks. By 8.15 a.m. it had reached N.43.d. and N.43.b., and was making good progress westward; and, continuing to work northward and westward throughout the day, it reached to the north M.17.c. (where it was stopped by the Turks holding the strong point M.16—M.16.a.) and to the westward, the points M.22.c., N.44.g. and N 44.k.

At 8.37 a.m., after a seven minute bombardment, the 2/4th Gurkhas and 1/5th Buffs of the 35th Brigade assaulted and captured, with little opposition, the Turkish trench for two hundred and fifty yards on each side of M.15.a.; and then these two battalions worked to the right and left respectively, capturing, practically without opposition, the Liquorice Factory and joining up with the 38th Brigade.

Attempting to push on northward across the open, however, they were caught by enfilade fire from guns on the Kut peninsula and had to restrict themselves to pushing patrols, supported by bombing parties, along the edge of the Tigris and up the trenches M.15.c.—M.13.b. By nightfall the brigade advanced line occupied from M.10.m. on the Tigris bank to M.14.c.; and it had also taken over from the 38th Brigade the line N.43.d.—N.43.a. In the meantime the 36th Brigade had established piquets along the Tigris bank to link up with the 35th Brigade right at M.10.m.

On the IIIrd Corps left the 39th Brigade made little progress during the day. Enemy detachments were found in the morning to be holding the water channel north-west of N.40 and the trenches N.45—N.45.a. With its very extended front the 39th Brigade could only make available a company of the 7th Gloucestershire supported by four guns to attack these trenches; but the attempt was made at noon. As the Gloucestershire advanced a heavy dust-storm came on and this prevented artillery and machine gun support; and the company

at first lost direction and came under heavy frontal and enfilading fire. But it pushed on steadily in spite of severe casualties. Though part of the company got within fifty yards of the hostile trench, it could advance no further; and the survivors dug themselves what cover they could where they lay until dark, when they withdrew having incurred 119 casualties.* The other casualties in the IIIrd Corps during the day only totalled 115. The 60-pounders of the 2/104th Battery had carried out a successful bombardment at nine thousand six hundred yards' range, with aeroplane observation, against the Turkish bridge at Shumran, which they hit and broke; and they also sank several *mahailas*.

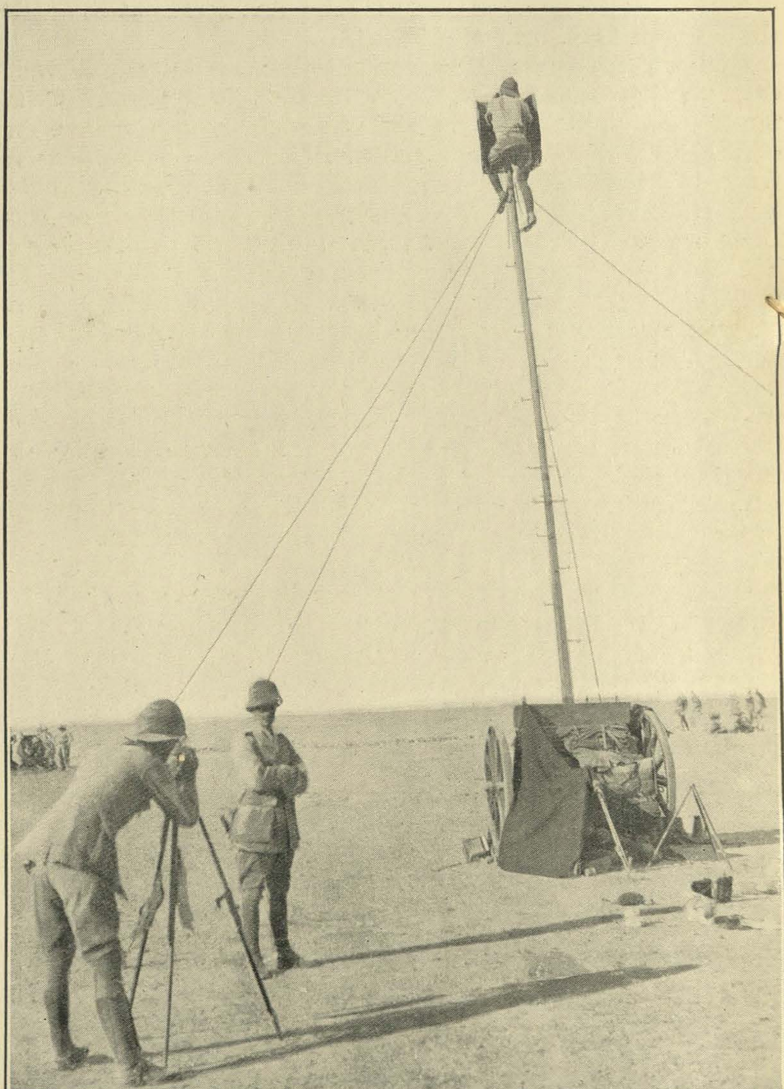
The Turks now apparently came to the conclusion that they were holding too extended a front; for during the night 10th/11th they withdrew, under cover of a considerable amount of sniping, to positions in rear. This withdrawal had been unexpected by the British and was not discovered by their patrols till the morning of the 11th, when it was reported that the Turkish main line seemed to run roughly from K.41 to K.50, behind a series of advanced posts.

Writing home on the 10th February, General Maude said that it was wonderful how the Turks stuck to their defences in spite of very heavy losses and no successes except in occasional counter-attacks. He also expressed his admiration of the fighting spirit and grit displayed by his own men. In describing the difficulties which the Turks had created for us by inundating the desert to the westward, he mentioned that this had the advantage of enabling us to find water for our cavalry horses away from the rivers; and he added that his railways and transport were all working well, while his river transport was on such a basis as to cause him no more anxiety about supplies and stores.

A strong southerly gale throughout the 11th February prevented the use of aeroplanes and raised so much dust as to interfere seriously with the work of the British artillery. But the IIIrd Corps, meeting only slight opposition, continued a steady advance with a view to reaching the eastern arm of the Shumran bend and to enclosing completely the Dahra bend. During the morning and early afternoon it appeared as if this object would scarcely be achieved that day, but towards evening the advance progressed rapidly and by nightfall the

* The figure 119 is taken from a detailed statement of casualties given in the War Diary of the IIIrd Corps, "A" Branch. In the War Diary of the 7th Gloucestershire, the casualties incurred are noted as 73.

To face page 137.



Artillery observation ladder.

Shumran bend had been reached. At midnight 11th/12th, the advanced line of the IIIrd Corps ran from M.12 via M.16.a. —M.18.c.—M.22.k.—M.23.c. to M.30.; the flanks of the 14th and 13th Divisions joined at M.18.b.

During the 11th, the 13th Division, which had now a very extended line to hold, was reinforced by units relieved by the 9th Brigade and by the two battalions of the 8th Brigade in Corps Reserve, who took over the protection of the western flank as far north as P.27; and the Corps Cavalry had definitely ascertained that the enemy in some strength was entrenched along the line of the Massag canal, especially about N.55. The total day's casualties in the IIIrd Corps amounted to 91, of which nearly half had been caused by enfilade gun fire from the Kut peninsula among the 2/4th Gurkhas on the extreme right flank.

Rain during the night 11th/12th February laid the dust and cleared the atmosphere, but had stopped by daybreak on the 12th, though a south wind and low clouds indicated that more rain was probable. During the morning the 13th Division gained more ground on its left, where its flank reached K.55 on the Tigris. Thence southwards its line continued along the river bank to M.32 and from there bent south-eastwards towards N.47. The Turks still held the Massag canal about N.55.

That morning, a general staff officer* of the IIIrd Corps reported, as the result of personal observation from an artillery ladder† near M.16, that the Turks appeared to be holding K.41.h.—K.44 as their main line, though the slope of the ground hid much of the area north of the line K.36—K.50. Enemy advanced posts were holding the strong point M.20—K.41 and the line K.42—K.42.b.—K.43.a.; and they had some machine guns at K.40. The ground in front of these positions was absolutely flat and open and the dry water channel running north-west from M.18.c. was shallow and would give cover only to men crawling.

General Marshall realised that before an assault could be made on the enemy's main position it would be necessary to capture his advanced positions to allow of the construction of the requisite approach and assembly trenches; and he came to the conclusion that these preparatory arrangements could be completed to admit of an assault on the 14th February.

* Major D. I. Shuttleworth.

† These light portable ladders, which could change position easily, were of great use for artillery observation. At the top was a bullet-proof shield and it was found by experience that they could frequently be put up within one thousand yards of the Turkish trenches.

General Maude, however, was doubtful if the IIIrd Corps would be able to develop their trenches sufficiently by that time to do themselves justice.

Briefly stated, General Marshall proposed that the 14th Division should establish itself along K.41.f.—M.20, while the 13th Division should occupy the line M.18.c.—K.42.a., i.e., facing north-east. The 14th Division was then to capture the line K.39.a.—K.40 and await there the probable Turkish counter-attack. If this happened and the Turks thereby suffered heavy punishment, it should give the 13th Division a favourable opportunity to assault and capture K.42.d.—K.44. This plan, as will be seen, was subsequently modified.

At 3.10 p.m. on the 12th February, after ten minutes' bombardment by a battery of 18-pounders and two howitzers, a company 102nd Grenadiers (35th Brigade), with another company in reserve, advanced to assault the enemy's advanced post in the strong point M.20—K.41. It had been observed that this work, a favourite target of our artillery, was strongly held by night and very weakly by day; and the intention was to capture it by a daylight raid launched from behind our trench barricade at M.18.b. There was to be no artillery preparation, but all the artillery of the IIIrd Corps was to be in observation, and, if the surprise failed, to put down a "box barrage." The ten minutes' artillery fire which was carried out was only meant to appear to the Turks as one of our usual intermittent bombardments. The 102nd Grenadiers were informed that only slight opposition need be anticipated and that they were to cut steps in the trench behind M.18.b. to admit of the rapid egress necessary. This plan miscarried. Some of the artillery staff misinterpreted the orders; and the 102nd, expecting little opposition and finding, as they say in their war diary, the trench narrow and shallow, omitted to cut steps and moved their men out into the open under cover of the artillery bombardment into lines of platoons before beginning to advance. But no sooner did they start the assault than they came under very heavy machine gun and rifle fire directed from trenches on both flanks of the strong point. With the greatest gallantry and determination, however, the men of the 102nd continued their advance until almost the whole company had been shot down. Finally five of them, of whom subsequently only two were found alive, managed to reach their objective and to hold on there. Of their seven British and Indian officers all had become casualties, as well as 99 of their 136 Indian other ranks. The company in reserve,

accompanied by the battalion commander, Major J. P. May, did its utmost to push on, but it also suffered very heavy casualties, including Major May, and was unable to effect its purpose.*

A further artillery bombardment of the hostile position was then carried out, when the remainder of the 102nd assaulted successfully and held the position against several Turkish attempts to recapture it. A company 37th Dogras was sent forward to reinforce the 102nd Grenadiers (whose total casualties were 297) ; and this by great dash and gallantry it succeeded in doing in face of a very heavy hostile fire—though at a cost of the loss of five British and Dogra officers and 104 Dogra other ranks. After dark a second Dogra company was able to reinforce the position without loss. The errors made were thus rectified ; and this gallant episode, of which both battalions have every reason to be proud, deprived the enemy of an important tactical point from which he could cover most of the rest of his line with enfilade fire, and also enabled us to force the withdrawal of the enemy advanced posts to the east of this strong point.

While this fighting had been in progress, the 38th Brigade, meeting only slight opposition, had captured K.42—K.42.b. —K.43.a., thus gaining a trench frontage of about eight hundred yards opposite the centre of the enemy's main line.

The total casualties during the day in the IIIrd Corps amounted to 507, of which four-fifths had been incurred by the 102nd Grenadiers and 37th Dogras.

That day (12th February) British aeroplanes, which had been unable to get up, owing to the weather, on the 11th, reported that the Turks had removed their boat bridge from the western arm of the Shumran bend. This action was apparently due to the British artillery fire on the 10th.

In a letter of the 12th February to General Whigham, General Maude said that he could not speak too highly of the magnificent way in which his troops had fought. He considered that the Turks had shown themselves to be very tough customers and that there were probably few troops who would have continued to hold on as they had after the continuous hammering they had received since the 9th January. But, he added, they seemed to have lost their vigour and were not half so formidable as they had been even a week before.

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* Owing apparently to the heavy casualties, the remainder of the 102nd and two supporting companies of the 37th Dogras, although held in readiness, received no orders from the front ; and the IIIrd Corps artillery had not been warned to be in observation.

On the 11th February news was received from the War Office that the German and Turkish general staffs had held a conference in Berlin at the beginning of January and it was understood that it had been decided there that the Turkish Second Army in Armenia was to send all the troops it could spare to Mesopotamia to allow of a decisive blow being struck at the British. At that time the Turkish Second Army had withdrawn its fighting front and the Russians opposing it were experiencing considerable difficulty, owing to the snow, in identifying the formations and units remaining to their front. But it was believed that the 47th or 48th Turkish Division was being sent to Mesopotamia in addition to several regiments from Armenia. It was also reported that the Turks intended to withdraw from Hamadan.

The Russian Caucasus Army, whose strength, excluding the force under General Baratoff, was understood to be about 200,000 rifles, 28,000 sabres and 475 guns,* intended to assume the offensive, as did also the force under Baratoff. But their long and imperfect communications, most of them under snow, were creating such difficulties that it was quite uncertain when an advance in strength could commence.

General Maude estimated on the 12th February that the strength of the Turkish XVIII Army Corps opposing him on the Tigris totalled some 500 sabres, 12,900 rifles and 91 guns. The rifle strength was calculated as follows, on a basis of 400 rifles or less for each battalion except in the 51st Division, where it was taken to be 560 :—

	Rifles.
4*th* *Division.*—10th Regiment (four battalions) ; 156 Regiment (two battalions); 167th Regiment (three battalions).	3,190
45*th* *Division.*—3rd, 141st and 142nd Regiments (three battalions each).	3,030
51*st* *Division.*—7th and 9th Regiments (three battalions each).	3,330
52*nd* *Division.*—40th and 43rd Regiments (three battalions each).	1,850
11th Depot Regiment (two battalions) ..	800
One company Gendarmerie	100
Sappers.—(One company per division) ..	600
Total	12,900

* Mainly field and mountain guns, as the snow and bad communications prevented the use of their heavy guns.

General Maude further estimated the enemy dispositions in and west of the Kut peninsula to be as follows :—

	Sabres.	*Rifles.*	*Guns.*
Tigris, left bank :—			
Kut and Shumran peninsulas.	100	1,530	58
Shumran—Bughaila ..	—	400	4
Tigris, right bank :			
Dahra bend	—	4,570	2
Shumran bend ..	100	1,800	—
Shumran—Bughaila ..	210	500	2
Total	410	8,800	66

This left a force of about 90 sabres, 4,100 rifles and 25 guns as holding the positions on the Tigris left bank at Sannaiyat and between there and Kut.

It is not possible from information at present available to check these estimates accurately. Prisoners were captured in the Dahra bend on the 15th February belonging to five battalions (1/10th, 3/10th, 1/167th, 2/167th and 3/167th) of the 4th Division ; and while there is reason to believe that the two battalions 156th Regiment were between Sannaiyat and Kut on the left bank, there is no indication of the presence on the Tigris of the 2/10th and 4/10th Regiments. Muhammad Amin in " Baghdad and the Story of its Last Fall " says that all the nine battalions of the 45th Division were destroyed or taken prisoner in the Dahra bend, whereas prisoners taken there on the 15th only belonged to four battalions (2/141st, 1/142nd, 2/142nd and 3/142nd) of this division ; but as it had lost heavily in the Khudhaira bend Muhammad Amin's remark may have been meant to include both bends. He also states that the small remnants of the 45th Division were attached for the subsequent retirement to Baghdad to the 14th Division, which appears to have begun arriving on the Tigris about this time. In the Dahra bend on the 15th, prisoners were also taken from the 1/7th Regiment of the 51st Division, which is known to have been holding the Sannaiyat position ; and from two companies of the 40th Regiment of the 52nd Division, which appears to have been in the Kut and Shumran peninsulas.

At this time, General Maude's information led him to believe that there were only a few gendarmerie posts between Bughaila and Baghdad, where the garrison was estimated

at about 160 sabres and 2,200 rifles, including depots and recruits; while the 4,500 troops scattered along the Euphrates were, except for two Anatolian battalions of the 156th Regiment, reported to be mainly Arabs and Kurds.

Having consolidated, during the night 12th/13th February, the positions gained on the 12th, the IIIrd Corps continued on the 13th its preparations for the coming attack and also gained some ground on its left towards K.51; its total casualties for the day amounting to 82.

On the 12th General Marshall had sent his divisional and artillery commanders his proposals for the attack,* which General Maude had just approved. Preparations for an assault on the 14th were, he said, to be pushed on, while in view of a possible enemy attempt to withdraw by ferry the bulk of his force, our patrolling must be carried out with enterprise and our artillery must fire barrages intermittently at night. At the same time, General Marshall asked his commanders to put forward any remarks they wished to make concerning his general proposals.

In reply to this, General Egerton, commanding 14th Division, wrote to Corps headquarters on the 13th offering the opinion that an attack against the enemy's centre could be carried out under more favourable conditions to ourselves and with more decisive result than the attack which was proposed against the Turkish left. Briefly stated, General Egerton's reasons were that the uncertainty regarding the exact positions of the enemy's trenches on his left, apparently the strongest part of his position, would restrict the assistance which our supporting artillery could give; while our attack, which would have to be delivered at an awkward angle, would be subject to enfilade and reverse gun and machine gun fire from across the Tigris. On the other hand, an attack against the enemy's centre, where his position seemed to be clearly defined and to be lacking in depth, would be less liable to enfilade fire from the Kut and Shumran peninsulas; our artillery could give it effective support, as could also the machine guns and rifles on our right; and as pressure from our right should pin the enemy to his left, this portion of his line might well be cut off if the attack against his centre was successful and was pushed right through.

General Marshall accepted this point of view, which was, he considered, strengthened by the fact that it had been found very difficult to locate and silence the hostile machine guns

* See page 138.

across the Tigris; and he recommended to General Maude that he should order an assault against the enemy's centre to be carried out the next morning, i.e., the 14th. General Maude agreed; and certain readjustments of the IIIrd Corps line were effected. The 40th Brigade, which was to carry out the assault, took over the frontage held by the 38th Brigade; one of the latter's battalions, i.e., the 6th Loyal North Lancashire, remaining temporarily attached to the 40th Brigade; and the 14th Division extended its left to K.42.

Early on the 14th, however, General Maude ordered the assault to be postponed for twenty-four hours to allow more work on the assembly trenches (K.42.a.—K.43.a.) to be carried out. During the afternoon, with a view to leading the enemy to believe that an assault against his left was intended, a demonstration by the 14th Division, accompanied by a short intense artillery bombardment, was carried out; and this seemed to show that the left flank of the Turkish position was held in strength. The IIIrd Corps casualties for the day amounted to 58.

That day, the British troops on the Tigris were somewhat amused to learn that the Berlin papers of the 9th February reported that the fighting in Mesopotamia, which was, they said, reaching its climax and being carried out by the British with the greatest energy and with constant reinforcements, remained wholly without result. The report admitted, however, that the British efforts to recapture Kut necessitated the bringing up of Turkish reinforcements. With regard to this last point, General Maude's Intelligence Staff received information that the Turks were moving their 37th Regiment from the area south of Lake Urmia to Baghdad.

The plan of attack finally adopted for the 15th February was that the 13th Division, supported on its right by the 14th Division, was to assault the enemy's centre. With a view to diverting the enemy's attention from the real point of assault, the Cavalry Division was to operate vigorously towards the west of the Shumran bend, commencing not later than 8 a.m., with pressure on the enemy detachment holding the Massag canal. At 8.30 a.m. the artillery supporting the assault, which was to be carried out by the 40th Brigade and a battalion 38th Brigade starting from K.42.a.—K.43.a., would commence a twenty-minute intense bombardment of the trench to be assaulted, i.e., K.43.d.—K.44.b. At the same hour, the 14th Division, holding a brigade (35th) in readiness to seize any favourable opportunity to advance, was to start machine gun

and rifle fire to sweep closely the hostile positions eastward of this trench; and at 8.40 a.m. the 39th Brigade was to start a similar fire against the Tigris left bank along the line K.52—K.54.

After capture and consolidation of the line K.43.d.—K.44.b., the assaulting infantry would advance and secure, as an offensive wedge in the enemy's position, the trench area K.43.d.—K.43.k.—K.48.b.—K.48.a.—K.44.b. In the 13th Division, the 38th Brigade (less one battalion attached 40th Brigade) and one battalion 39th Brigade were to be held in readiness to move forward at any moment after 9 a.m.; in the 14th Division, the 36th Brigade, less 62nd Punjabis about the Liquorice Factory, was to be ready to support the 35th Brigade if necessary; and the 37th Brigade was to form 14th Divisional reserve.

At daybreak on the 15th February both divisions of the IIIrd Corps were disposed in some depth. On the right the 35th Brigade held the line M.12.a.—M.16—M.18.c.—K.42, with sap-heads pushed forward from M.13 half way to K.41.f., and from M.13.d. to M.20.c., and with the former Turkish strong point (M.20—K.41) held by an advanced post. The 62nd Punjabis of the 36th Brigade held the Tigris bank from the Hai mouth to M.12; another battalion of this brigade held the line Liquorice Factory—M.22.c.; while the rest of the brigade were in rear, with the 37th Brigade still farther back. The 40th Brigade held the front line (K.42—K.42.a.—K.43.a.) of the 13th Division, while the 6th Loyal North Lancashire extended the front to the left from K.43.a. to K.55; and the 38th Brigade (three battalions) was in reserve in rear of the 40th Brigade. The 39th Brigade held the Tigris bank M.30—M.32 and thence south-eastward to about N.47.

The general line of the Turkish position appeared to extend from K.41.f. to K.50.

At 7 a.m. on the 15th a company of the 6th Loyal North Lancashire captured a Turkish advanced post at the ruins just south of K.51; and at 8 a.m. the British artillery carried out a short intense bombardment of the hostile positions on the enemy's left in front of the 35th Brigade. From the heavy artillery barrage which the Turkish guns, in reply to this bombardment, laid down in front of the 35th Brigade, it appeared as if they expected an attack in this area.

At 8.45 a.m., after the intense artillery bombardment of the frontage of assault had proceeded for fifteen minutes, the 8th Royal Welch Fusiliers (on the right) and 4th South Wales Borderers started their attack, each battalion advancing in four waves. The subsequent assault was entirely successful

and before 9 a.m. the whole of the trench line K.43.d.—K.44.b. was in our hands. These two battalions then gradually extended their gains, repulsing several hostile counter-attacks and capturing many prisoners; and by 12.30 p.m., reinforced by the bulk of the 8th Cheshire, had securely established themselves in the rough rectangle K.43.d.—K.43.k.—K.43.h.—K.48.b.—K.48.a.—K.44.d. On the extreme left the 6th Loyal North Lancashire left flank had advanced to about K.51.

Throughout the morning the fire of the British artillery had been most effective, especially in minimising, with aeroplane co-operation, the fire of the Turkish guns posted in the Kut and Shumran peninsulas.

About noon, General Egerton, who was closely watching the situation in order to seize any favourable opportunity, came to the conclusion that the time was ripe for a further advance on the right of the 40th Brigade; and at 12.25 p.m., after ascertaining that the 38th Brigade was not going to advance, he decided to push in with the 35th Brigade. Orders were issued that the 2/4th Gurkhas in the trench area M.12.a.—M.16 should demonstrate as if collecting for an attack; and at 1.45 p.m., after a fifteen-minute bombardment, the 1/5th Buffs and the 37th Dogras were to advance against the trench line K.40.c.—K.40.f.—K.42.g.—K.42.h., i.e., the Turkish left centre. The Turks were completely misled by the Gurkha demonstration and seem to have turned all their artillery fire on to the area M.12.a.—M.16; and the Buffs and Dogras, under the accurate and effective fire of their supporting artillery, carried out the advance with dash and determination. Only weak opposition was encountered and as soon as these two battalions reached the enemy's trench large numbers of Turks surrendered, with the result that the brigade gained a decisive success. Parties worked westward, and before 3 p.m. joined hands with the 40th Brigade, the Buffs alone having taken about 400 prisoners. On the extreme enemy left a body of Turkish troops still held to their trenches, but as they were by this time practically surrounded it was not long before they surrendered. In the meantime on the extreme Turkish right the North Lancashire had captured 85 prisoners at K.51.

By 4 p.m. organised enemy resistance in the Dahra bend had entirely broken down except in the north-west corner, where Turkish troops still held the line J.62—K.45—K.47—K.50. Heavy rain had just commenced and continued to fall, rendering the ground heavy and slippery, its incidence having been, fortunately for the British, delayed sufficiently

to admit of success.* At 6.15 p.m. the British artillery opened a bombardment on the remaining Turkish line, intense for the first ten minutes and then continuing for some hours at a slow rate of fire; but, as it was raining hard and very dark, it was decided to postpone an attack till the moon rose about 2.30 a.m.

The 35th Brigade on the British right had in the meantime kept up a gradual advance; and about midnight the commander of that brigade arranged with the 40th Brigade commander that they would make a joint attack, following an artillery bombardment at 3 a.m. But the necessity for it did not arise. Captain H. St. G. S. Scott, of the 2/4th Gurkhas, with two of his companies had already, on his own initiative, reached a point about five hundred yards upstream of J. 62, having captured 98 prisoners; and it was decided to let the Gurkhas continue their advance and clear the Dahra bend. This work they carried out most successfully by 7 a.m., on the 16th, when they reached K.50, having captured 264 more prisoners, including three regimental or battalion commanders.

During the 15th February the Cavalry Division, operating to the westward, had encountered and engaged, about 8 a.m., an enemy infantry detachment, estimated 400 strong, holding the line of the Massag canal south of the Shumran bend with advanced posts along the water channel running south from M.33. At 11.30 a.m. the 39th Brigade received orders to advance from M.32—N.47 and capture the line held by these advanced posts; and this it successfully effected with slight loss during the afternoon, with the assistance of the Cavalry Division and some artillery. By nightfall, when the cavalry withdrew to the Hai, this line had been consolidated and connected up with the right of the 9th Brigade; and during the ensuing night the Turks withdrew from the Massag canal. Operations in this area had been hampered throughout the day by the marshy state of the ground, rendered worse in the afternoon and evening by the heavy rain.

The total casualties during the 15th and 16th February amounted in the IIIrd Corps to 503 and in the Cavalry Division to 11.

The capture of the Dahra bend effected a practically complete clearance of all organised resistance on the Tigris right bank and terminated a phase of fighting which, frequently severe,

* Edmund Candler in "The Long Road to Baghdad" says: "A captive officer gave us the Turks point of view: 'We have been praying for this rain,' he said, 'for two months to hinder your advance; now it has come too late.'"

had lasted more or less continuously for two months. The operations during this period had entailed an advance through a network of hostile trenches extending for about twelve miles along the Tigris bank and for some miles along the Hai; and had called for fighting qualities of a high standard from the British and Indian troops engaged.

Describing the attack on the 15th February to General Whigham in a letter written five days later, General Maude said that it had been "a most creditable piece of work, for it was a nasty place to go into, as the Turks had their artillery in a semi-circle around the points we assaulted on the far bank of the river. We were, however, justified in going on as I knew that they were short of gun ammunition, and that their fuses were bad, and the result speaks for itself."

On the Turkish side the losses had been very heavy, for besides finding some 250 dead bodies, we had taken 1,995 prisoners, mostly Anatolian Turks, including five regimental or battalion commanders. We had, besides, captured 2,500 rifles, a large quantity of ammunition and stores and five machine guns, of which many others had been either destroyed by our artillery or thrown into the river. The Turkish defence of their right bank positions had been gallant in the extreme and is worthy of our highest admiration. With their backs to an unfordable river, across which they had but scanty means of communication—and this besides other disadvantages meant shortage of food—and with inferior artillery, they had displayed the stubborn bravery and exceptional powers of endurance for which they are renowned; and till the last few days of the conflict they had not hesitated to counter-attack again and again in face of considerable odds.

It is interesting to note that Muhammad Amin offers the opinion in "Baghdad and the Story of its Last Fall" that the two months' resistance which the Turks had maintained on the right bank of the Tigris cost them more than it cost us; for though it may have weakened our strength it completely broke, he says, the powers of resistance of the XVIII Turkish Army Corps.

Throughout these two months' operations, the British medical services were able, thanks to the reorganisation and preparations during the previous eight or nine months, to deal quickly and efficiently with all casualties as they occurred.*

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* For details, see Chapter XI, Vol. IV, Medical Services, General History of the War.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE BATTLE OF KUT AL AMARA, 1917 (*concluded*).

THE PASSAGE OF THE TIGRIS, THE CAPTURE OF SANNAIYAT AND THE EVACUATION OF KUT BY THE TURKS.

(MAPS 22 AND 23.)

TO mark the decisive phase resulting from the clearance of the Dahra bend and in recognition of the fine work of the officers and men serving under his command, General Maude issued on the 15th February the following Order of the Day :—

> "After a period of severe and strenuous fighting, extending with only short pauses over a period of two months, I wish to express to the Navy, to Lieutenant-Generals Marshall and Cobbe, to the divisional and brigade commanders, to the staffs, including my own, and to all ranks of the fighting troops, my warmest thanks for their splendid work and my congratulations on their brilliant successes. To the regimental officers, non-commissioned officers and men a special word is due for their matchless heroism and fighting spirit, and for their grit and determination so fully in accord with the best traditions of British and Indian regiments. Whilst regretting deeply the casualties necessarily incurred in the attainment of our object, the series of stinging blows dealt to the enemy, his severe losses which are out of all proportion to the size of his force, and his obviously falling spirits, afford ample proof to all ranks that their sacrifices have not been made in vain.
>
> "My thanks too are due to Major-General MacMunn, to the directors and their assistants, and to all ranks of the administrative services and departments, both in the field and on the lines of communication, who, in the face of unexampled difficulties, have by sterling work and energy risen superior to them and have regularly met the needs of the fighting troops with ample supplies, stores and munitions, without which the loss of life would have

been considerably increased and success rendered impossible, and have been the means of providing every comfort attainable for the sick and wounded.

"To each and every member of the navy and army, and to those who, though not belonging to either of the services, have helped to bring about the results achieved, I tender my warmest thanks for their whole-hearted and magnificent support. The end is not yet, but with such absolute co-operation and vigour animating all, continuance of our success is assured.

F. S. MAUDE, *Lieutenant-General.*

Commanding Indian Expeditionary Force D."

Although the right bank was practically clear of the enemy, the Tigris still covered and afforded protection to the main Turkish force in its entrenched positions extending from Sannaiyat to Shumran and to its communications along the left bank. Further attacks would, therefore, have to be carried out on the left bank, either against Sannaiyat or by crossing the Tigris above Sannaiyat; or by a combination of both. As our operations since mid-December had led the enemy to extend his forces over a very wide front and had caused him very heavy casualties, General Maude felt that there were bound to be vulnerable points in this front if he could ascertain them; but this was not easy. The heavy rain from the 15th to early on the 17th February and high floods in the Tigris rendered a crossing very difficult; and General Maude finally came to the conclusion that his best plan was to attack both the enemy flanks, i.e., at Sannaiyat and Shumran, simultaneously. Merely to feint an attack on Sannaiyat was to repeat a manœuvre that had frequently been carried out during the last three months; so that, if the Turks were to be pinned to Sannaiyat and their attention drawn away from the crossing at Shumran, nothing but a real assault seemed likely to suffice. Moreover, in view of the enemy's attenuated strength, such an assault seemed to have good chances of success and might enable General Maude to effect his object even should the crossing at Shumran fail. In fact, it seemed that the Turks could hardly have sufficient troops for an effective defence of both points; and in view of the approaching flood season and hot weather General Maude had no time to waste.

As regards possible Turkish reinforcements, it was considered probable that the 44th Regiment was on its way from

Kermanshah to rejoin the 51st Division on the Tigris*; and it was also reported that the 11th and 37th Turkish Regiments were being sent to the Tigris from Kurdistan and Persia. There was, however, no mention, in any of General Maude's reports or estimates at this date, of the possibility of the arrival of the 14th Turkish Division (41st, 64th and 149th Regiments), though its leading battalions had either actually arrived on the Tigris front or were very near.

General Maude considered, from what he saw of the prisoners recently captured, that the *moral* of the Turkish soldiery was undoubtedly lower than it had been previously; and though some of the prisoners were still very fine fellows, a certain percentage were weaklings and old men. But he saw no reason to conclude that their fighting value was seriously impaired, as the majority were Anatolian Turks, whose lack of enthusiasm was largely counter-balanced by soldierly qualities of a high order. Though there had certainly been a shortage of food among them on the Tigris right bank owing to the difficulties of ferrying under gun fire, the prisoners seemed fairly well fed; but their clothing was wretched and their force seemed to be short of gun ammunition, hand grenades and trench mortar bombs. At this date, also, reports all agreed that the number of Germans on the Tigris front and at Baghdad had been reduced to a small number of staff officers, specialists and civil officials.

By the middle of February the Arabs on the Hai and along our Tigris line of communication had become much less aggressive, evidently realising that it was politic to adopt a more friendly attitude towards us; and on the other fronts held by Force "D," i.e., Euphrates, Karun and Bushire, the situation was quiet. Moreover, reports, as yet unconfirmed, stated that the Turks had abandoned their project of moving troops down the Euphrates.

Our supply situation was excellent, owing largely to the fine development that had taken and was still taking place in the river transport arrangements; and the good state of reserve supplies at the front enabled General Maude to allow his land transport to cease working during wet weather, a much-needed arrangement. The conversion to metre-gauge of the Qurna–Amara railway was, it is true, only progressing slowly, but as the difficulties were being overcome an early improvement seemed certain.

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* It actually arrived about the 22nd February.

In an operation order issued at 11.30 a.m. on the 16th February General Maude estimated the enemy strength on the Tigris front to be as follows :—

	Sabres.	*Rifles.*	*Guns.*
Left bank :			
Sannaiyat position	—	3,000	19
Sannaiyat to Kut	90	1,100	6
Kut and Shumran peninsulas..	100	4,500	60
Shumran to Bughaila	—	400	4
Right bank :			
River bend west of Shumran..	100	800	—
Shumran to Bughaila	210	500	2
Total	500	10,300	91*

The order went on to say : " In view of the enemy's constant lack of success, it is important that he should have no rest to recover his *moral* and that we should press him as vigorously as possible. The Army Commander intends, therefore, to clear his troops from the river bend west of Shumran on the right bank of the Tigris and to assault and capture Sannaiyat."

The IIIrd Corps was to continue, as soon as weather conditions permitted, to operate vigorously against the enemy's troops still on the right bank of the Tigris in the river bend west of Shumran† ; the Cavalry Division and Mobile Bridging Train were to be ready to move at short notice ; and the Ist Corps was to attack Sannaiyat next day.

On the 16th also, the officer commanding the Mobile Bridging Train received instructions to reconnoitre for a bridge site on the eastern side of the Shumran bend near K.55., the site of the former Turkish bridge. Any idea of an immediate crossing was, however, soon dispelled by the weather. There had been very heavy rain on the night 15th/16th, and during the afternoon of the 16th and the ensuing night it came down in torrents, with the result that our bivouacs and trenches were flooded and the whole country became so deep in mud that movement was practically impossible.

For some time past the Ist Corps commander had been making out his plans for attacking Sannaiyat ; and during the last few days General Maude had been discussing these in

* General Maude's Tigris Force was still at an approximate strength of 46,000 to 48,000 rifles and sabres, and 174 guns.

† The IIIrd Corps was then occupying, with two infantry brigades, a line of piquets along the river bank up to the Massag canal and thence along that canal ; the remainder of the Corps being more or less concentrated in rear.

detail with General Cobbe. Consequently, by the 16th all preliminary arrangements were ready. The 9th Brigade and two battalions of the 8th Brigade were still attached to the IIIrd Corps, but the remainder of the 3rd Division infantry held the Tigris right bank from opposite Sannaiyat to the mouth of the Hai; while the 7th Division was on the left bank facing the Sannaiyat trenches—the 28th and 21st Brigades, in this order from the right, being in front line, with the 19th Brigade in rear.

It was arranged that the assault on the 17th February should be delivered, across the intervening space of some one hundred and twenty yards, by the 20th Punjabis and 1/8th Gurkhas* against a frontage of about three hundred and fifty yards immediately adjoining the Tigris; the remaining two battalions of the 21st Brigade were to be retained in reserve; and only the two foremost lines of the enemy's trenches were to be captured and consolidated. The 28th Brigade on the right would support by fire this assault, which was also to be covered and assisted by the fire of 58 guns and howitzers,† 30 Stokes' mortars and 12 two-inch trench mortars. The naval gunboats were also to co-operate. "Zero" hour was to be at 12 noon, when the artillery bombardment would commence; and three and a half minutes later the infantry would start the assault. The 19th Infantry Brigade would form divisional reserve.

On the morning of the 17th, however, the slippery and muddy state of the ground made all relief and other movements so slow that "zero" hour had to be postponed to 2 p.m. After this, the assault was carried out as planned. The enemy was apparently taken by surprise, and by 2.10 p.m. the 20th Punjabis (on the right) and 1/8th Gurkhas had occupied the Turkish second line with only slight casualties. Attempts made at once by the enemy to counter-attack from the northward were successfully dealt with by our supporting and covering fire; and consolidation proceeded. Our artillery barrage kept down the hostile rifle fire and for over an hour the enemy made no further attempt to counter-attack. The

* For four days previously these two battalions had been withdrawn from the front to practise this assault on a replica of the Turkish trenches, constructed in rear of the British line, which all the battalions and brigades of the division had previously practised over.

† On left bank: 9th Brigade R.F.A. = 18 guns; A and B/56th Batteries = 8 guns; D/69th Battery = 4 howitzers. Total 30.

On right bank: A/215th Battery = 4 guns; B/69th = 4 howitzers; 524th Battery = 2 howitzers; C and D/56th Batteries = 8 guns; 7th Battery = 6 guns; 159th Battery = two 6-inch howitzers; 2/86th Battery = two 60-pounder guns. Total 28.

situation seemed so favourable, indeed, that at 3.30 p.m. the two remaining battalions of the 21st Brigade were ordered to prepare for an assault on the enemy's third line.

This order had scarcely been given when the Turkish guns, which had hitherto concentrated against the British front trenches and "no-man's land," turned their fire on to the 20th Punjabis and 1/8th Gurkhas. This concentrated and accurate shell fire so shook the 20th Punjabis* that, when the Turks followed up their artillery bombardment with a bombing counter-attack, first the right of the Punjabis and then the whole battalion, followed by the greater part of the Gurkhas, fell back to their starting point. A small party of Gurkhas on the extreme left held on, however, to their gains with the greatest gallantry and tenacity; but an advance by the reserve battalions of the 21st Brigade to restore the situation was found impossible, owing to the congestion in our front trenches caused by the confused and disorganised mass of Punjabis and Gurkhas, aggravated by the wet and slippery ground; and at dusk the Gurkha party remaining in the enemy trench was withdrawn.† General Maude says in his despatch that, though this attack failed, considerable loss had been inflicted on the enemy‡ and the operation had served its purpose in attracting the enemy to the Sannaiyat front. In a private letter written on the 20th he shows what a disappointment to him this failure was, though he somewhat philosophically concluded his remarks by saying: "However, things cannot always go right."

That the Turks were getting anxious as to their ability to withstand our advance was evidenced two days later by reliable information that on or just before the 18th February the commander of the Turkish XIII Army Corps on the Persian front had received orders from Halil to hold the 6th Division in readiness to move to the Tigris; and further confirmation was received a few days later by information that the Turkish posts on the Euphrates had received orders on or about the 20th February for all troops, except a few guards on important stores, to move back to Baghdad.

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* This battalion had been recently reconstituted by the elimination and replacement of its trans-frontier Pathan companies; and few of its officers and men had had any previous experience of modern shell fire.

† In this attack the 7th Division suffered 575 casualties, including 264 in the 20th Punjabis and 185 in the 1/8th Gurkhas.

‡ Twenty-six Turkish prisoners had been taken and, before the Turkish counter-attack took place, 94 Turkish dead had been counted in the captured trenches.

During the 17th and 18th February patrols from the IIIrd Corps and Cavalry ascertained that the Tigris right bank, for seventeen miles above Shumran, was clear of the enemy; and in the afternoon of the 17th General Maude informed General Marshall that at any time from the night of the 18th/19th it might be found desirable to throw a bridge across the Tigris and establish a force on the left bank. But the failure of the Sannaiyat attack and the fact that the Tigris began to rise in flood necessitated an alteration of the date.

On the 18th, by midnight, the 13th Division had taken over the whole front and the 14th Division was concentrated for the first time for a month. On the 19th, at a conference between Generals Maude and Marshall, no decision was arrived at either as to date or hour of crossing, the latter being a subject of some controversy.

The Tigris continued to rise till noon on the 21st, when it showed signs of falling again; and till then it was too risky to rely upon bridging*. On that day it was decided that the crossing should be carried out early on the 23rd.

General Maude's instructions to General Marshall for the crossing, which was to be carried out in the Shumran bend by the IIIrd Corps, emphasised the importance of not affording the enemy any indication of what was intended. All the preliminary arrangements were to be made as quickly as possible under cover of darkness. Amongst other measures, these included reconnaissance for and preparation of a bridge site and the necessary approaches; arrangements for the disposition of covering artillery in the Dahra bend and west of the Shumran bend; practice in off-loading and carrying the pontoons forward, launching them and getting into them, all in the dark; and practice in rowing. General Maude also informed General Marshall that arrangements would be made to feint at crossing elsewhere two or three hours before the actual crossing at Shumran.

General Marshall at once commenced his preparations, and, after discussion with General Maude, selected the 14th Division to carry out the crossing. This selection was taken by the force generally as a favourable omen for the success of the enterprise, owing to the reputation that General Egerton, his staff, his officers and his men had gained in the recent operations.

* General Marshall reported to G.H.Q. that, as the flood increased possibilities of surprise and sufficient pontoons were available, he was willing to cross by pontoons alone; but General Maude decided that the risk was too great and that the crossing should not be attempted until bridging was possible.

After full reconnaissance of the eastern arm, M.34.* at the southern end of the Shumran bend was decided on as the best site for the bridge. An effective converging fire could be brought to bear from the right bank to cover the crossing here; the river at this point was only three hundred and forty yards wide†; and, although on the near side the river bank was vertical and would require ramping, there was on the further side a suitable shelving beach.

As, however, the opposite bank was defended by a line of loopholed trenches with machine-gun emplacements, it would be necessary to get a covering party across the river before commencing the construction of the bridge. Three points—M.32., M.29. and K.55.—were accordingly selected, all downstream of M.34., to obviate the danger of derelict pontoons floating down on the bridge under construction; and at each of them a battalion of infantry was to be ferried over to form the covering party. At the bridge site and at each of these ferries the positions of ramps and places for launching pontoons, as well as tracks leading to them, had all to be carefully marked out so as to be easily distinguishable in the dark, and at the same time unnoticeable by hostile aircraft in the daytime.

While other detailed arrangements were being carried out as unostentatiously as possible, the 37th Brigade,‡ selected by Generals Marshall and Egerton to furnish the covering party, was practised both by day and by night on the Hai in the necessary handling of the pontoons; and by night also some guns were emplaced in the Dahra bend (but not to fire till they covered the crossing) and gun emplacements were prepared and camouflaged there and to the west and north-west of the Massag canal, as well as machine gun and trench mortar emplacements along the river bank from J.62. to K.66.*c*. Further, after the 19th February, all movement by day near the southern and eastern sides of the Shumran bend was stopped.

The bridging and ferrying were prepared as two separate operations; the technical arrangements for the former being under the direction of Captain Witts, R.E., of the Bridging Train, and for the latter under Major Pemberton of the 12th Company, Sappers and Miners. The 2nd Norfolk, 1/2nd Gurkhas

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* See Map 23.

† From bank to bank; the actual water width was less.

‡ Commanded by Brigadier-General O. W. Carey, this brigade was now composed of the 2nd Norfolk, 67th Punjabis, 2/9th Gurkhas and 1/2nd Gurkhas, the three former battalions having relieved the 1/4th Devonshire, 36th and 45th Sikhs, transferred, owing to heavy casualties, to the Tigris Defences.

and 2/9th Gurkhas were the three battalions detailed to cross by the ferries; and volunteer rowers were obtained from the 2nd Norfolk, 1/4th Hampshire, 71st, 72nd and 88th Companies, R.E., 12th, 13th and 15th Companies, Sappers and Miners, and 128th Pioneers. Thirteen pontoons, each manned by four rowers and a coxswain, were detailed for each ferry, as well as a fortieth pontoon, for laying a cable, to be manned by the 14th Divisional Signal Company; and a total of 735 rowers, to give three reliefs and a reserve, was arranged. As it happened, this number proved insufficient owing to the heavy casualties among the rowers; and eventually additional volunteers had to be called for from the 13th Division. In addition to the rowers, each pontoon was to carry ten fully equipped infantrymen or their equivalent weight in ammunition, Lewis guns, etc.*

The first intention was that the covering party should make the passage under cover of darkness, but on the 21st February, in deference to the views of General Egerton, it was decided that it should be carried out at daybreak, i.e., on the 23rd. General Egerton's reasons for preferring to cross by daylight were that in the flooded condition of the river and the backward state of training of the rowers it would be difficult to get troops across quickly and on to any prearranged line; that our artillery, trench mortar and machine gun covering fire could effectively suppress hostile fire in the southern end of the peninsula and would be better able by day to deal with any Turkish reinforcements who, as they had no communication trenches, would have to advance over the open; and he felt sure that the covering force would feel much more confidence in a daylight crossing. His plan was to bring up his covering force to its points of crossing under cover of darkness and to start, with as little display of force as possible, as soon as it was light enough to see to shoot. General Marshall, who wished the crossing to begin at 3.30 a.m., in order to get the cover of darkness against machine gun fire, decided that General Egerton should have his way, provided that the crossing started as soon as it was light enough to see.†

While the 14th Division was engaged in its preparations, other measures were being carried out to mislead the Turks and distract their attention from Shumran. The 7th Division displayed activity in front of Sannaiyat, which our artillery bombarded

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* Further details of the arrangements are given in articles by Major Witts in the Journals of the Royal United Service Institution, August, 1923, and of the Royal Engineers, December, 1923.

† Sunrise was about 6.40 a.m.

daily; a small raid, to be made by the 3rd Division across the Tigris near Maqasis, was arranged for the night 22nd/23rd; and from the 19th February preparations were made as if for constructing a bridge across the river near the Liquorice Factory.

The latter arrangements were carried out by night, with, as Candler aptly puts it,* "all the inevitable noises of preparation exaggerated, all the natural precautions of secrecy religiously observed"; and it was hoped that hostile aeroplanes would observe the withdrawal of sentries from the Shumran bend and the towing of pontoons up the Hai towards the Liquorice Factory.† The active use of a searchlight opposite this point at this time and the increased activity of the Turkish river piquets between Sannaiyat and Kut tended to show that the enemy's suspicions had been successfully aroused.

On the 21st February the Chief of the Imperial General Staff telegraphed saying that, in view of the success obtained and of the heavy losses inflicted on the enemy, he did not wish General Maude to feel hampered by the instructions telegraphed on the 22nd December—these intimated that General Maude might justifiably incur casualties at roughly 25 per cent. of his infantry engaged‡—if he thought he could gain a substantial success by crossing the Tigris or any other operation; and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff asked for General Maude's views, but added that this need not delay action in the meantime if a favourable opportunity occurred. General Maude replied on the 22nd that as he had felt confident that the Chief of the Imperial General Staff would not wish him to be too rigidly bound by the terms of the instructions referred to, he had been continuing preparations, which were taking time as they were complicated and as the Tigris was in flood. His plan, he said, was, briefly, to draw the Turks towards Sannaiyat as much as possible and then to throw the IIIrd Corps across the river at Shumran.§

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* "The Long Road to Baghdad."

† Lieutenant-Colonel Tennant, in his book "In the Clouds above Baghdad," explains how one hostile aeroplane was allowed purposely to evade our aerial barrage in order to observe these preparations.

‡ See page 87.

§ On the 14th February the Commander-in-Chief in India had telegraphed to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff suggesting that a message be sent to General Maude, congratulating him on his continued success, and at the same time expressing the hope that he would soon force the enemy to evacuate Sannaiyat and Kut, whose re-capture would bring great prestige to our arms throughout the East. But General Robertson, replying next day, said that he had already, on the 22nd December, pointed out to General Maude the importance of such action; and he was doubtful of the advisability of appearing to press the matter, as General Maude would doubtless make another attempt to cross the Tigris if opportunity offered.

On the 21st February General Maude's force was disposed as follows. The 7th Division and two battalions* of the 8th Brigade were on the Tigris left bank opposite Sannaiyat, while the 3rd Division (less 9th and half 8th Brigades) was holding the right river bank from opposite Sannaiyat to the Hai; the 40th Brigade held the right river bank from the Hai westwards to M.32., whence the 39th Brigade carried on the line to and along the Massag canal as far as N.55.; while the 9th Brigade, still attached to the IIIrd Corps, guarded the Corps flank and rear by holding the line N.55. to A.A.10. The 14th Division, more or less concentrated, was encamped on the west bank of the Hai near Kala Haji Fahan; and the Cavalry Division was encamped near Besouia, also west of the Hai.

General Maude's order, dealing with operations intended for the 22nd and 23rd February, was issued on the morning of the 22nd.† After estimating the enemy's strength and dispositions and pointing out the necessity for promptness and vigour, the order defined the action to be taken. The Ist Corps was to assault and capture on the 22nd a portion of the Sannaiyat position and to continue to act vigorously in that neighbourhood so as to draw as many of the enemy as possible from the Kut and Shumran peninsulas; the Ist Corps was also to display general activity along the river front from Sannaiyat to Kut and, during the night 22nd/23rd, but not later than 2 a.m., was to carry out the raid at Maqasis, already mentioned, with the object of misleading the enemy; the IIIrd Corps was to commence the passage of the river in the Shumran bend early on the 23rd, the general lines on which this was to be conducted and the further operations of the IIIrd Corps after reaching the left bank being indicated; the Cavalry Division was to be ready to move in any direction at an hour's notice at any time after 9 a.m. on the 23rd; and the Royal Flying Corps were given instructions as to the information required of them, the co-operation they were to give to the artillery and the measure of defence against hostile aircraft that they were to afford.‡

The arrangements made by General Cobbe for his assault on Sannaiyat were in many respects similar to those for the

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* 47th Sikhs and 59th Rifles.

† Given in full in Appendix XXXVII. Originally issued on the 20th February, it had been amended and revised when the Tigris flood necessitated postponement of the operation; and its details were well known to both Corps commanders as the result of discussions some time before its final issue.

‡ Lieutenant-Colonel Tennant, in his book "In the Clouds above Baghdad," shows how the squadron under his command had established complete air supremacy.

unsuccessful attack on the 17th February. As then, only the first two enemy lines on exactly the same frontage, i.e., about three hundred and fifty yards adjoining the Tigris, were to be captured and consolidated. Two battalions were again to make the assault; this time the 1st Seaforth Highlanders and the 92nd Punjabis (of General Peebles' 19th Brigade), but with the 125th Rifles held ready to support them and the 28th Punjabis in reserve. The 28th Brigade, on the right of the 19th, was to contain the enemy in its front by fire; and the 21st Brigade was to form Divisional Reserve, with the 47th Sikhs and 59th Rifles of the 8th Brigade still in Corps Reserve. The number of supporting Stokes and trench mortars was the same as on the 17th, but the number of the artillery guns had been increased by eleven, bringing up the total to 69*; and the naval gunboats were again to co-operate. The artillery bombardment was to commence at 10 a.m., and the infantry assault was to be delivered seven and a half minutes later.

Advancing, according to schedule, shortly after 10 a.m. on the 22nd February, the Seaforths (on the right) and the 92nd Punjabis achieved immediate success and without heavy casualties. The first three of the five waves in which they advanced occupied the enemy's second line, while the last two waves remained in the Turks' first line.

It was not long before the enemy started a series of counter-attacks, which were all repulsed with no great difficulty; and consolidation proceeded with good progress. About 12.20 p.m. a heavier counter-attack against our left met with better success, as the 92nd Punjabis were driven out of the trenches they had captured just as a company 125th Rifles was moving forward to reinforce them. But the Seaforths proved themselves to be a great source of strength. They showed no signs of wavering and their commandant pushed men along to his left into the trenches vacated by the Punjabis, who were quickly rallied in "no-man's land" by Colonel Maclachlan, commanding them, and were soon led back by him with the 125th company to re-occupy the lost trenches. The situation was thus restored.

About 1 p.m. General Fane, commanding 7th Division, ordered the Black Watch (21st Brigade) forward to be at the disposal of General Peebles, who was at the same time also

* C/56th Battery moved over to the right from the left bank on the night of the 21st/22nd February, but one of its guns fell into the river from the bridge and was lost; and on the left bank the 7th Battery was joined by the rest of the 4th Brigade, R.F.A., (14th and 66th Batteries).

authorised to call on the 28th Brigade for a battalion if he should require it. But the necessity did not arise. By 2.15 p.m. the 19th Brigade had established itself so securely in the captured trenches that General Cobbe, after consultation with General Fane, instructed the latter to carry out the pre-arranged plan for an assault against the enemy's first and second line trenches immediately to the north of the portions occupied by the 19th Brigade.

This assault started at 3.15 p.m. under cover of an intense bombardment, being carried out by the 53rd Sikhs (on the right) and the 51st Sikhs of the 28th Brigade. It was entirely successful, and the captured frontage was thus extended northwards for a further five hundred and fifty yards. The leading waves of the 51st, finding no trace left of a second line, advanced nearly to the enemy's third line before they discovered their mistake and retraced their steps to dig themselves in where the second line should have been. For this reason and owing to the lack of cover in the other captured trenches, which had been much damaged by our artillery fire, these two battalions suffered considerable losses from the hostile gun, machine gun and rifle fire; and soon after 4 p.m. they began to give way before a determined counter-attack against their right. But companies from the 2nd Leicestershire and 56th Rifles were at once sent forward to support them and, steadied also by the resolute attitude of the Seaforths on their left, the 51st and 53rd quickly rallied and the position was made good.

By 5 p.m., the 19th and 28th Brigades were securely established all along the captured nine hundred-yard frontage, and although the Turks made further counter-attacks, especially against our right, these were all repulsed before dark without great difficulty.

This attack cost the 7th Division 1,332 casualties, practically all among the battalions of the 19th and 28th Brigades; but officers and men felt considerable elation at the thought that the moment for which they had been working and waiting so long had at last arrived*; and that they were now within sight of a success which promised to efface the recollection of our former failures. The Seaforths, as part of the composite Highland Battalion, and the 92nd Punjabis had led the assault exactly ten months before and had then only failed to make

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* Ever since the first attack on Sannaiyat on 6th April, 1916, the 7th Division had been in the trenches opposite Sannaiyat.

good the footing they had gained through lack of support. This time there had been no such failure.

The fighting spirit shown on the 22nd February, 1917, by all the battalions engaged had been very fine ; but as General Maude said in his despatch : " The brilliant tenacity of the Seaforths throughout this day deserves special mention."

The Turks must have suffered heavily. They made a succession of counter-attacks—General Maude in his daily progress report gave the actual number of these as seven—and our supporting artillery and machine guns, especially those at Crofton's Post, fired on all of them evidently with considerable effect. In any case, they made no further attempts at counter-attacking during the ensuing night. This may have been due, of course, to other causes than heavy losses ; for we know from what Muhammad Amin says in " Baghdad and the Story of its Last Fall " that this successful attack caused the despatch from Kut and Shumran of all available troops to assist the 51st Division at Sannaiyat, and the Turks may have required time to organise these reinforcements for a further effort ; or it is quite possible that the successful raid by the 3rd Division across the river near Maqasis during the night 22nd/23rd may have affected their decision.

For this raid careful preliminary preparations had been made on the two previous nights. Twenty pontoons had been brought up and placed, near Maqasis, in the Dujaila depression, at the mouth of which a causeway had been constructed from which to launch them. The raiding party of 3 British officers and 93 Indian ranks of the 27th Punjabis (7th Brigade), under command of Captain Pitman—carrying hand grenades and rifles with fixed bayonets but no ammunition—was to cross in twelve pontoons, each manned by six rowers and a coxswain, found, half by the 21st Sapper Company and half by the 34th Sikh Pioneers ; and it was to be supported by the fire of ten guns (including two howitzers and two 60-pounders) and of machine guns specially emplaced.

Starting at 11 p.m. on the 22nd February, eleven pontoons* successively reached the starting point (about two hundred yards upstream of the Dujaila depression) by 12.50 a.m., apparently unperceived by the enemy. But when, about half an hour later, they began to cross the river they came under hostile rifle and machine gun fire ; and, all chance of surprise having gone, they called by a pre-arranged signal for their

* One started leaking and was left behind.

supporting guns and machine guns to put down a barrage. Six of the pontoons (all with Sapper crews) made the crossing successfully in about twenty minutes,* three got out of control and eventually returned to the right bank and two stranded on a sandbank. As the raiding party landed on the left bank, the enemy posts in front of it retired; and the Punjabis first cleared a small work at the south-west corner of the peninsula opposite Maqasis, capturing a trench mortar, and then moved out right and left along the river bank, inflicting some casualties on the enemy encountered, till at 2.5 a.m. the recall rocket signals were fired. Returning to their pontoons, they embarked successfully with the captured trench mortar and arrived back on the right bank within half an hour, having suffered eleven casualties. What effect this daring enterprise actually had on the enemy at the time is unknown, but it is said that, as the raiding party was rowed back, the Turks started two beacon fires as a signal to their own force that we had crossed.

On the evening of the 22nd, the 7th Division received orders from General Cobbe to continue consolidation, prepare for further active operations next morning, send strongly supported bombing patrols during the night to gain ground towards the Turkish third line and our own right, and, next morning, after cutting with 2-inch trench mortar fire all the wire in front of the enemy's third line, make preparations to assault this line on a frontage of about three hundred yards adjoining the river. The Corps Reserve on the left bank was at the same time strengthened by the transfer across the river of the headquarters 8th Brigade and the 1st Manchester.

On the 22nd and night 22nd/23rd February, the IIIrd Corps was engaged in completing its preparations. Operation orders by the IIIrd Corps and the 13th and 14th Divisions were issued early on the 22nd summarising what had already been arranged. The Corps order said that construction of the bridge was to commence as soon as the left bank had been secured, but that troops would continue to be ferried across during the bridge construction. The covering brigade was to take up a position across the peninsula, approximately on the line K.53.–K.60.; and when the bridge was finished the whole weight of the IIIrd Corps would be brought against the enemy and operations would be carried out with vigour and determination in order to force a decision. All the artillery of the IIIrd Corps would be

* The Tigris here was about seven hundred yards wide.

in position to the east, south and south-west of the Shumran bend to cover the crossing; and further supporting fire would be available, as required, from ten trench mortars, forty-five machine guns and infantry (with their Lewis guns) of the 13th Division posted all round the bend from J.63. to K.66.*c*. After the 14th Division had crossed the river, the infantry brigades of the 13th Division were to be ready to follow when ordered, commencing with the 38th Brigade, then concentrated near Besouia. The 9th Brigade and Corps Cavalry would hold the line N.55. to A.A.10. and were to be prepared to take over at short notice the line M.46.–K.70.–K.66.*c*. Further, troops of the 13th Division were to make a feint at crossing the river from the Liquorice Factory throughout the night of the 22nd/23rd.

The 14th Division order dealt with certain details and emphasised that no firing of any description was to take place until the enemy opened fire on our troops crossing the river. The 36th Brigade was to follow the 37th Brigade across the river as soon as ferries were available; and the 35th Brigade was to remain in camp ready to move at short notice.

From 6 p.m. on the 22nd throughout the night, the 40th Brigade at the Liquorice Factory endeavoured, by movements of carts and timber and splashing in the river, to lead the Turks to believe that a crossing was intended; and during the night artillery observation ladders were posted all round the Kut bend, so as to give the Turks the impression next morning that a bombardment to cover the crossing was imminent. From movements observed on the morning of the 23rd the Turks appear to have been deceived by this demonstration.

In the meantime all the artillery guns of the IIIrd Corps were moved into their prepared positions. The twenty-eight* of the 14th Division were on or about the line M.43.–K.68., north-west of the Massag canal, being covered by the 39th Brigade, which extended its left after dark from M.39. to K.66.*c*., thence westward to K.70. and thence southward to M.46. and N.55.; while the forty-two† guns belonging to the 13th Division were in various positions between the northern extremity of the Dahra bend and the Massag canal.

The orders to the artillery laid down that all guns were to be ready, when called upon, to fire at any moment after

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* 13th Brigade, R.F.A. = 18 guns; C/69th Battery = 4 howitzers; and 61st Battery = 6 howitzers.

† 55th and 66th Brigades, R.F.A. = 32 guns; A/69th Battery = 4 howitzers; 72nd Battery = 4 howitzers; and 159th Battery = two 6-inch howitzers.

5.30 a.m., to form a barrage on the southern end of the Shumran peninsula (lifting as necessary) and to fire on previously selected targets. Six barrages had been arranged, any of which could be formed as the situation demanded.

In addition to the above-mentioned seventy guns, a counter-battery group of fourteen* guns had been formed to deal, under Corps orders, with the enemy's artillery.

Ten two-inch trench mortars (136th, 137th and 138th Trench Mortar Batteries), in position about K.51., M.30., M.31., M.32. and M.33., had instructions only to fire if the enemy opened heavy rifle or machine gun fire on our crossing, when they were to pay special attention to the hostile machine guns.

Forty-five machine guns of the 36th, 39th and 40th Brigade machine gun companies were in ten prepared positions between K.51. and M.41. and their instructions also were not to fire before our crossing had been detected by the enemy.

At 6 p.m. on the 22nd, some ten minutes after the sun had set, the three leading columns of the covering force, each preceded by a company 128th Pioneers (to improve the track) and followed by thirteen pontoons on carts and a searchlight, moved off to their respective ferrying points; No. 1 Column to M.32., No. 2 Column to M.29. and No. 3 Column to K.55.† The remainder of the 37th Brigade followed No. 1 Column to bivouac near N.48.*a.*; and behind them came No. 2 Bridging Train, with its column over a mile long, including two motor launches on bullock-drawn pontoon wagons and accompanied by a company 8th Welch Pioneers,‡ to park about 1,500 yards short of the river bank.

Just before the columns moved off, two hostile aeroplanes passed overhead, but do not appear to have realised what was happening; and the columns all reached their ferrying points without incident. Unloading their pontoons some distance

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* 60th Battery = 6 howitzers; 2/104th and 157th Batteries = eight 60-pounders.

† Composition of columns was as follows:—

No. 1.	*No.* 2.	*No.* 3.
2nd Norfolk.	2/9th Gurkhas.	1/2nd Gurkhas
100 Rowers, 2nd Norfolk.	100 Rowers, 1/4th Hampshire	130 Rowers, 1/4th Hampshire
100 Rowers, 71st, 72nd and 88th Cos., R.E.	100 Rowers, 12th Co., S. & M.	100 Rowers, 13th Co., S. & M.
75 Rowers, 128th Pioneers.	30 Rowers, 15th Co., S. & M.	

‡ One and a half companies of this battalion and the 71st Field Company, R.E., had been detailed to assist the Bridging Train.

from the river, they moved them by hand into positions on the river bank ready to launch, and then, about 1 a.m., lay down to get some rest. It was a very dark night and beyond some hostile machine gun fire from the vicinity of K.54., directed for a short time against No. 3 Column, the enemy showed no signs of having noticed anything unusual.

Early in the night, 14th Division headquarters moved forward to N.47.*a*., and during the night all preparations, such as the digging of ramps and laying of telephone cables, were completed; and our artillery, trench mortars and machine guns took up their allotted positions. The enemy still apparently had no suspicions of what was taking place. We knew very little of their dispositions, although we believed that they held the opposite river bank with a line of piquets, with supports in rear and with a reserve at Dahra barracks. Owing to the embankment along the further river edge, nothing could be seen of the enemy's positions; and purposely, to avoid attracting attention, no aeroplane photographs had been taken of the left bank here.

About 5.15 a.m. on the 23rd February, while it was still dark, the pontoons were lifted over the embankment; by 5.30 a.m., when the opposite bank could just be discerned, they were all in the water and joined together*; and within the next ten or fifteen minutes the leading parties had started to cross at all the three ferries. The whole operation had so far proceeded admirably and in the most complete silence.

At No. 1 Ferry, though the enemy sentries began to shoot soon after the crossing had started, they had evidently been surprised; and the fifty shots or so that were fired during the first trip across only caused few casualties, owing probably to the dim light. Disembarking successfully, the Norfolks' leading party captured a machine gun† and then cleared and occupied the river bank to its right for about five hundred yards. The pontoons continued to ferry men over and as these reached the left bank the Norfolks gradually pushed up the river bank to their left and also to their front, the hostile rifle fire gradually diminishing as our guns, mortars and machine guns on the right bank gained the ascendancy. The enemy artillery did not start to shell the ferry till about 6.30 a.m., and even then caused us but few casualties, though a direct

* The pontoons were bipartite.

† Second-Lieutenant B. F. Hornor, of the Norfolks, who was the first man ashore, achieved its capture, practically single-handed, as it was about to open fire. For this he was awarded the D.S.O.

hit sunk one of the pontoons—whose crew, however, were saved. By 7 a.m. two companies of the Norfolks, by 8 a.m. three companies, and by about 9.30 a.m. the whole battalion with its Lewis guns, were on the left bank, having suffered only a few casualties during the crossing. Three of their companies now held a line extending from a point about three hundred yards north of the ferry, along a Turkish trench, to the river bank south-west of M.35., where their left was checked by an enemy post; and their reserve company held the ferry head, i.e., the river bank line which had first been captured.

At No. 2 Ferry the leading party of 2/9th Gurkhas got half-way across the river before the enemy opened fire, but this increased so rapidly in intensity, from rifles, machine guns and guns, that only ten pontoons reached the left bank. The other three, their crews having been killed or wounded, drifted down the river out of control. Having landed their passengers, the ten pontoons started to return, but, owing to the heavy enemy fire, only six got back to the right bank, where they loaded up again and started their second trip. Five of them crossed successfully by about 7 a.m., bringing up the total of the 2/9th Gurkhas on the left bank to one and a half companies, all the battalion bombers and five Lewis guns; but owing to the heavy casualties among the rowers none of the pontoons were able to return to the right bank.

At about 8 a.m., three pontoons arrived, having been retrieved and towed up from downstream by men of the 128th Pioneers. These pontoons, carrying an artillery forward observation officer with a telephone and extra rowers for stranded pontoons on the opposite bank, managed to get across the river. Efforts were then made to send rowers down the left bank to assist at No. 3 Ferry, where twelve pontoons were stranded; but hostile machine guns, firing from concealed positions near K.53, effectively stopped all such attempts. At about 8.45 a.m., two pontoons, with wounded, succeeded in recrossing the river from the left to the right bank at No. 2 Ferry. These, in spite of the heavy enemy fire, crossed once more to the left bank loaded with ammunition, bombs and a few extra men. But, before this, it had become evident that further ferrying at No. 2 Ferry in face of the hostile fire was scarcely possible; and it was proposed at about 8.30 a.m. to send the remainder of the 2/9th Gurkhas to cross at No. 1 Ferry, and this was agreed to. In the meantime the first boat-load of the 2/9th Gurkhas ashore, under Major G. C. Wheeler, had rushed and captured an enemy trench, about fifteen yards from

the water's edge, in face of stout opposition ; and as successive boat-loads landed, the Gurkhas, under the fine leadership of Major Wheeler and after close hand-to-hand fighting, extended their gains and established themselves in a Turkish trench about 150 yards inland.* Communication was established with the 1/2nd Gurkhas on their right, but for some time a forty-yard gap between the two battalions at a break in the river embankment could not be crossed owing to heavy fire from concealed enemy machine guns.

At No. 3 Ferry the first lot of thirteen pontoons all succeeded in approaching the left bank before the enemy opened on them with a heavy machine gun and rifle fire. It had been anticipated that the Tigris current would carry the pontoons crossing here down to about K.53., but the Hampshire oarsmen rowed so steadily and well that actually they landed some four hundred yards above there, at a point where the river embankment was about fifteen feet high. Here the leading parties of the 1/2nd Gurkhas under Lieutenant Toogood secured a footing after a hand-to-hand fight with a Turkish piquet. But, for a considerable time, they had to hold on without further reinforcement. Of the thirteen pontoons, only two, owing to the very heavy casualties among the rowers, were able to return to the right bank, whence, with two others which had floated down from No. 2 Ferry, they started across to make a second trip, manned by fresh rowers from the Sappers and Miners. But only one of the four reached the left bank and that with only one unwounded man in it ; one pontoon sank a few yards out from the right bank ; and two were not seen again that day.† Thus, soon after 7 a.m., twelve out of fifteen pontoons were stranded on the left bank, where the majority of rowers were either killed or wounded ; and, although several attempts were made to get these pontoons back, they all failed owing to the heavy and accurate fire of hostile machine guns well hidden in the canal running west and south-west from K.53. It is impossible to say how many of the 140 odd Gurkhas, who had started to cross, managed to reach the left bank safely ; but soon after 10 a.m., when the battalion received orders to move its remaining men and rowers—except for a piquet to maintain signalling communication with the party on the left bank—to cross at No. 1 Ferry, there were only

* For conspicuous gallantry in this operation, Major Wheeler was awarded the V.C.

† These pontoons were recovered a day or two later ; one with over a hundred bullet holes in it.

56 effective rifles remaining on the left bank. Thanks to the information these signalled across, our guns on the right bank were able to afford them such good support that they managed to hold on to their position in face of all Turkish attempts to drive them out.

About 6.30 a.m. Captain Witts, commanding the Bridging Train, with his personnel, moved up to the bridge site, where all preliminary work had been done as arranged and where the 71st Company, R.E., and a company 8th Welch Pioneers were waiting under cover to assist. Orders came from General Egerton, commanding 14th Division, about an hour later that, as the crossings at Nos. 2 and 3 Ferries had come to a standstill, it was necessary to give moral support to the covering parties by commencing construction of the bridge. As arranged previously, the wagons and carts carrying the bridging material came up at once at a gallop at three hundred yards intervals, unloaded and galloped off again, practically without being hit. The Turkish guns were concentrating on a deep dry canal at M.32. and thus had little or no effect. About 8.30 a.m. the shore transom of the bridge was placed in position and the land anchorage fixed, while attempts were made to see if the pontoons could be rowed against the Tigris current. This was found impracticable and it was necessary to bring up one of the two motor boats. These, towering some eleven feet in the air and drawn by slow-moving bullocks, offered a fine target. But the Turkish arrangements for observation and correction of their artillery fire seem to have been defective, or were unable to function owing to our aerial activity; for not only was the first boat successfully launched by the 71st Field Company,* but the second motor boat was ordered up as soon as the first was in the water and was launched with equal success. Although the Turkish artillery had little effect, enemy riflemen from the opposite bank caused a number of casualties to men and mules engaged in work on the bridge until about 11.30 a.m., by which time the left bank opposite had been cleared.

At No. 1 Ferry, where the arrival about 10 a.m., of 114 more rowers from the 13th Division afforded considerable relief to the original crews who had suffered heavy casualties, the work of transporting men across the river was continuing steadily. The 2/9th and 1/2nd Gurkhas crossed at an average rate of two hundred men an hour until, by 2 p.m., the whole of

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* This performance was all the more creditable as the company had had no opportunity of practising it.

both battalions had reached the left bank. At 10.30 a.m., the 2/9th Gurkhas took over the ferry head from the Norfolk reserve company and during the next three and a half hours both Gurkha battalions gradually reinforced their respective advanced detachments. The Norfolks, overcoming opposition from the enemy about M.35., pressed forward, and the Gurkhas gradually came up on their right, all getting invaluable support from our guns, which effectively stopped several Turkish attempts to counter-attack. The enemy at the southern end of the Shumran peninsula must have suffered heavy casualties, as our artillery* and machine guns had been getting good targets all the morning; and the result began to appear just after midday when Turks began to surrender and were taken prisoner. About 1 p.m., the Norfolks, after overcoming considerable opposition at the ruins just south of it, occupied K.60., and the 1/2nd Gurkhas captured the dry canal at K.53., while half an hour later our artillery broke up a Turkish counter-attack coming down the centre of the peninsula.

At 2.10 p.m., the 67th Punjabis, the fourth battalion of the 37th Brigade, began crossing the river; and about half an hour later the 36th Brigade, near N.47.*a.*, was ordered to move a battalion forward to cross by ferry or bridge, whichever was ready first, while the 35th Brigade was ordered to advance at once from Kala Haji Fahan to N.47.*a.* At 3 p.m., by which time the 1/2nd Gurkhas, 2/9th Gurkhas and Norfolks had established themselves on the line K.52.–K.57.–K.62., large numbers of Turks were reported to be massing near the Dahra barracks; but any idea they may have had of making a counter-attack was soon dispelled by our artillery fire.

Just before 4 p.m., General Marshall sent orders to General Egerton that, for the night, the 14th Division was to hold with two brigades the line K.52.–K.62., with a third brigade as central reserve on the left bank. The main position was to be entrenched and wired and patrols were to be pushed boldly forward. The 13th Division was at the same time ordered to move the 38th Brigade to N.47. and to instruct the 39th Brigade to extend its left flank to J.98., placing piquets to cover artillery moving into new positions about J.100.–J.100.*a.*

* The expenditure of high-explosive ammunition was so heavy that, fearing a shortage, General Maude suggested to General Marshall that he should curtail it. Having regard to the deep irrigation cuts, affording cover to the enemy, against which shrapnel would be of little value, and to the necessity, in his opinion, of continuous close support to his infantry, General Marshall, however, preferred to take the risk and continue the bombardment. By nightfall all batteries had been reduced to the ammunition in their limbers; but our infantry had secured the crossing.

In the meantime work on the bridge had been progressing steadily, its rate of construction having been controlled by the time required to get out the anchors in the five-knot current, an operation requiring very careful handling of the motor boats. The Turkish artillery continued, throughout the day, to search this part of the river bend with high-explosive shell, but though there were many narrow escapes, neither bridge, cables, nor motor boats were hit* ; and damage from floating timber, which the Turks sent down the river, was successfully averted by naval parties, assisted after dark by army searchlights.† At 4.30 p.m., the bridge, two hundred and ninety-five yards long, was completed and ready for traffic. Its construction in eight hours was a fine performance, of which those concerned have every reason to be proud.

By this time one and a half companies of the 67th Punjabis had reached the left bank, and were posted about half a mile in rear of the centre of the line K.52.–K.62. ; and the remainder of the battalion now crossed by the bridge, with the 36th Brigade closing up ready to follow them and the 35th Brigade moving up from Kala Haji Fahan. As soon as the 36th Brigade had crossed, it took over the right half of the front line, i.e., from K.52. to K.59. ; and the 35th Brigade, following it, concentrated east of M.35. All the infantry battalions and Divisional headquarters of the 14th Division had crossed the bridge before midnight, and in the meantime the 38th Brigade of the 13th Division had arrived at N.48. on the right bank.

After dark, the enemy, who appeared to be in some strength on the line J.70.–J.81.–J.93., attempted no further offensive. General Maude's plans had taken them completely by surprise, and although General Maude did not know it, Halil, the Turkish commander, made all arrangements that night to retire up the Tigris. The Turkish situation is best shown by the following extract from Muhammad Amin's account in " Baghdad and the Story of its Last Fall " : —

> " As a matter of fact the attention of the Corps and Army commanders was attracted to the Fallahiya front (i.e., Sannaiyat) by the successful attack which Maude launched on the 22nd February, and all available troops were sent to the help of the 51st Division. Thus it was

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* Our Air Force successfully prevented all attempts at hostile aerial reconnaissance until, at 5 p.m., one enemy machine managed to escape their vigilance.

† A section of 18-pounder guns was kept ready to sink any *mahaila*, or ship, which the Turks might send down ; and a wire hawser was stretched above the bridge to catch mines.

that when all eyes were fixed on Fallahiya, the enemy, who had made a feint crossing near Maqasis, began to pass to the left bank a few hours later at Shumran, about seven miles west of Kut, under cover of very heavy artillery fire. The small number of defenders could offer little resistance. Owing to pressure at Fallahiya the day before, there was no formed body which could be rushed to the scene of the new danger. All small units at hand were sent up. But, owing to consequent disorganisation and the hasty improvisation, the troops were quite unable to carry out the Army Commander's orders to capture, or drive into the river, any enemy who had crossed to the left bank. In the evening the XVIII Corps Commander, who had with great difficulty been able to stop the enemy's advance, frankly explained to the Army Commander that he was quite unable to do so any longer."

Muhammad Amin says that Halil gave orders that night for the 51st Division to retire from Sannaiyat to Qala Shadi next day (i.e., 24th), and he expresses the opinion that this retirement, which was duly carried out after a few hours' fighting, averted, with the loss of only a few battalions, a disaster; owing, in his opinion, " to the slowness of the enemy and the good work of the 51st Division."

Further action taken the same night by Halil, according to the same author, consisted in the movement of Army headquarters up the Tigris to a point about twenty miles above Qala Shadi, as well as orders for the preparation of a defensive position at Qala Shadi; and, at the same time, a request to Turkish General Headquarters to hurry another division to Mesopotamia and instructions to the XIII Army Corps commander to send the 6th Division to Baghdad with the utmost despatch, while holding the Persian front with the remainder of his command.

The casualties in the British IIIrd Corps in effecting the passage of the Tigris on the 23rd February, 1917, were not excessive, as they totalled only about 350. The heaviest proportion—some 200—had been incurred among the rowers, whose steadfast gallantry won the admiration of all present; and among them none had excelled the behaviour of the men of Hampshire, who contributed 98 of the 200 casualties and who obtained six immediate awards for conspicuous bravery. In the Gurkha battalions the casualties among the British officers of the leading parties had been particularly heavy; while the honour of establishing the footing on the left bank fell

mainly to the Norfolk Regiment. The Turkish casualties are unknown ; but they must have been heavy, as we captured over 540 prisoners and five machine guns.

To turn now to the operations at Sannaiyat on the 23rd, where, as has just been shown, the main Turkish strength was concentrated. In accordance with its orders, the British 7th Division had spent the night of the 22nd–23rd in consolidating its gains and in sending bombing parties forward as a prelude to a further advance.* But, as General Fane reported to 1st Corps headquarters at 10 a.m., they were confronted by a maze of trenches in which their bombing parties were constantly getting lost and in which, in consequence, it was most difficult to maintain organisation. At 10.25 a.m., General Cobbe sent the 7th Division instructions to improve its defensive position and to gain ground by bombing with the support of trench mortars.

Just before noon General Cobbe received a message from General Headquarters approving the instructions issued to the 7th Division and directing him to act vigorously so as to prevent the Turks withdrawing. The Army Commander, said the message, wished the Ist Corps to keep the Turks in Sannaiyat so as to lighten the task of the IIIrd Corps, and incidentally give the latter the chance of rounding the enemy up. This message was passed on to the 7th Division ; and at 1.15 p.m. General Cobbe followed it up with an order to General Fane to act with the greatest vigour, pushing forward bombing parties, and at the same time intimated that he expected the Turkish third line to be in the hands of the 7th Division that evening.

The 7th Division patrols did act with vigour and about 1.30 p.m. penetrated into the enemy's third line at various points without opposition. Hearing of this, General Cobbe sent General Fane a message at 2.5 p.m. hoping that the patrols would be in the enemy's fourth line by evening and reminding him that the enemy could hardly recover till next day from the shelling he had undergone on the 22nd.

At 2.30 p.m., General Cobbe received the following message from General Headquarters :—

> " There appears to be large withdrawal of Turks from in front of you. Hope you are pursuing your rôle vigorously,

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* During the night 22nd/23rd and morning 23rd, the 51st and 53rd Sikhs of the 28th Brigade were relieved in the front line by the 2nd Leicestershire and 56th Rifles, and the 92nd Punjabis of the 19th Brigade were relieved by the 28th Punjabis. All three battalions relieved had suffered heavy casualties on the 22nd ; and owing to this and other reasons these reliefs were not completed till midday 23rd.

for on this much of success of our operations depends. If above is correct, you should not hesitate to attack instantly. Remember 1814 campaign and let us not repeat mistakes of Allies then. Acknowledge."

General Cobbe at once paid a personal visit to 7th Division headquarters and gave General Fane instructions to press the enemy vigorously, by advancing with artillery support*; and he telephoned at 3.15 p.m. to General Headquarters that patrols from the 28th and 19th Brigades had just met in two places in the enemy's third line, which was much knocked about and strewn with dead, and that the enemy in the fourth line, on a frontage of some four hundred yards adjoining the Tigris, was firing on our parties. At 3.20 p.m., in accordance with General Cobbe's instructions, General Fane ordered the 28th and 19th Brigades to push forward at once and occupy the enemy's third line and then to send patrols on to the Turks' fourth line, which was to be seized and occupied as soon as possible. The order concluded: "Enemy appear to be demoralised and withdrawing and full advantage of this can only be obtained by resolute and decisive action." At the same time the 21st Brigade, in divisional reserve, was warned to be ready to advance.

The 28th and 19th Brigades pushed forward, and by nightfall had occupied the enemy's fourth line for one thousand yards northward from the Tigris. The opposition encountered by the 28th Brigade on the right was not great, but that met by the 19th Brigade on the left was considerable. Between 6 and 7 p.m., Turkish attempts to counter-attack were dispersed by our artillery; and the 7th Division was able to consolidate its gains. The total casualties in the Ist Corps during the day were about 60; but the enemy appear to have lost heavily. Their third and fourth line trenches and the ground between were strewn with dead, estimated at over 600 in number. It is, however, probable that many of these occurred in the fighting on the 22nd.

At 5 p.m., the following order issued from General Headquarters :—

"Our recent successes, yesterday at Sannaiyat and to-day in effecting passage of Tigris, have rendered it difficult for enemy to retain his present positions. His losses have been severe and many prisoners have been taken. It is essentially a time when most vigorous action on part of all is necessary to bring about decisive results.

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* General Cobbe confirmed these instructions by a message sent from Corps headquarters to 7th Division at 4.5 p.m.

Ist Corps to continue to drive enemy westwards. IIIrd Corps to continue transfer of Corps to left bank and to enclose enemy from west. Patrols from both Corps to be pushed boldly forward to maintain touch with enemy during night and take advantage of any possible withdrawal. Cavalry Division, equipped as lightly as possible and carrying rations and grain as already ordered, to be at R.28. at 6 a.m. to-morrow and await orders from Army Commander. Orders to Royal Flying Corps will be issued as situation develops. Acknowledge by wire."

The enemy was evidently getting short of infantry, for our troops on the right river bank reported that the Turks were now employing cavalry and Arabs to hold the left bank between Sannaiyat and Kut; and General Maude estimated, on the 23rd February, that the total number of Turkish rifles remaining on the Tigris front did not exceed 9,200 rifles. But in this estimate he appears to have made no allowance for the 44th Regiment or for any of the 14th Division, of whose arrival he apparently only received the first intimation next day, from prisoners captured on the 23rd and 24th.* From captured documents and from information from other sources General Maude also came to the conclusion that most of the Turkish regiments (three to four battalions strong) had only four machine guns each left and that the enemy irregulars remaining on the Hai to the south only numbered about 400. Two days later, however, he received information that a machine gun company with German officers and non-commissioned officers had reached the Tigris front about the beginning of the month.

At 9 p.m., on the 23rd February, the Ist Corps issued orders for the 7th Division to consolidate the Turkish fourth line for one thousand yards north from the Tigris; to guard its right flank by strong posts in trenches gained farther from the Tigris than this; to push out boldly with strong patrols, adequately supported, so as to gain ground to its front and right; and to make preparations to attack the Turkish fifth line, some three hundred yards west of their fourth line, on a frontage of about eight hundred yards northward from the Tigris. General Fane had already, some two and a half hours before, issued orders—and these he did not alter—that the

* From these he learned that the 44th Regiment had rejoined the 51st Division on or about the 22nd February, and that the 41st Regiment (three battalions with a total strength of 700 to 900 rifles) of the 14th Division with an Engineer company and part of the divisional artillery had arrived on the Tigris front about the middle of February. The date of arrival of the rest of the 14th Division is still uncertain.

21st Brigade, relieving the wearied 19th Brigade in the enemy's fourth line, was to push patrols forward vigorously during the night and occupy, if possible, the Turkish fifth line ; while the 28th Brigade was to protect the right flank, blocking all trenches from the north and sending patrols along them to ensure that they were clear of the enemy.

The IIIrd Corps issued orders, which reached General Egerton at 11.20 p.m., for the 14th Division infantry to advance next morning at 6.15 and, supported by the converging fire from the right river bank of all the Corps artillery and the machine guns of the 39th and 40th Brigades, to capture the Shumran–Dahra Barracks position. The 38th Brigade was to begin crossing the bridge at 5.30 a.m. and was then to concentrate under cover just across the river, ready to support the 14th Division if called upon. The 39th Brigade was to be prepared to concentrate on the right bank near the bridge, and the 9th Brigade was to be ready to take over the western line of defence on the right bank up to J.98.–J.100. Just before midnight General Egerton issued his orders for the attack, at 6.15 a.m., of the enemy position J.72.–H.82. by the 36th and 37th Brigades, with the 35th Brigade, posted about four hundred yards north-east of the bridge, in Divisional Reserve. The 36th Brigade was to attack on the right with its left directed on H.76. ; the artillery of the 13th and 14th Divisions would bombard intensely the canal J.78.–J.82.–J.93 from 6.10 to 6.15 a.m., when it would wait in observation ; and the machine guns of the 39th and 40th Brigades, about J.99. and K.47.*a.* respectively, would co-operate with enfilading fire. The crossing arrangements at No. 1 Ferry were to be maintained in case it became necessary to use them.

Although, in the Shumran peninsula, as at Sannaiyat, the Turks showed no offensive activity, the night of the 23rd/24th February was bitterly cold, and sleep proved to be out of the question for the men of the 7th and 14th Divisions, even for those who were not employed in trench work or in the constant patrolling. In the Shumran peninsula, these patrols were able to push forward in front of our right for about one thousand yards without opposition, though farther west they came under considerable fire from about J.82.

The attack of the 14th Division on the 24th February up the Shumran peninsula started as planned. In the 36th Brigade, the 1/4th Hampshire (on the right) and 62nd Punjabis were in front line, with the 82nd and 26th Punjabis in support ; and in the 37th Brigade the 2nd Norfolk (on the right) and 67th

Punjabis led the advance, followed respectively by the 2/9th and 1/2nd Gurkhas. Both brigades came at once under hostile fire, which was especially heavy from the outer flanks. But, having achieved the most critical portion of their task, officers and men were in high spirits and, inspired by the hope of inflicting a decisive defeat on the enemy who had withheld them so long, they pushed on rapidly, regardless of fatigue, without even halting to fire. Soon passing beyond the hostile artillery barrage, and thus gaining comparative immunity, they swept the enemy out of the canal (J.78.–J.90.) with hardly a pause and continued to advance. At this stage the 1/4th Hampshire, supported by the 82nd Punjabis, on the right of the 36th Brigade came under heavy enfilade machine gun fire from about J.71. and the canal J.70.–H.70.; but though this fire caused some 300 to 400 casualties in the two battalions, they maintained such an unfaltering advance that observers in rear failed to notice that anything unusual had happened except that the brigade machine gun company had been diverted to that flank. On the left of the line the 67th Punjabis had encountered heavy opposition and a counter-attack by the enemy holding J.90.–J.93., and this prevented their keeping pace with the Norfolks on their right. But they drove the enemy back, taking about a hundred prisoners, and continued their advance.

By 7.20 a.m., after an almost uninterrupted advance of about 3,000 yards and the capture of many prisoners,* the 36th Brigade, with the Norfolks and 2/9th Gurkhas of the 37th Brigade, had seized the line of sandhills known as the Dahra ridge on the frontage J.74.–H.77.; and they then proceeded to extend to their right and left. The 67th Punjabis, supported by the 1/2nd Gurkhas, in face of considerable opposition were still advancing; but about 8 a.m., they were definitely checked, on reaching the line of the canal running north-east from J.97., by heavy fire from H.82.–H.83., where the enemy seemed to be in some strength.

By this time, the 36th Brigade had all its four battalions in front line and had extended its right to J.73. To the left of the 36th Brigade, the 2/9th Gurkhas and Norfolks of the 37th Brigade carried on the general alignment along the Dahra ridge and the left of the Norfolks had been extended to H.81. But there was a gap of over one thousand yards between the right of the 36th Brigade and the river bank; and a gap of several hundred yards separated the left of the Norfolks from the right of the 67th Punjabis. That part of the enemy force

* The 36th Brigade alone had captured two guns and about 250 prisoners.

which had retired in front of them to the north and north-west appeared to be occupying a line about one thousand yards distant from our troops on the Dahra ridge. To the south-east of the 36th Brigade line also, Turks were still clinging with a number of machine guns to positions about J.71. and along the canal from J.70. towards H.70. A further advance northward was, for the time being, obviously undesirable; and it was necessary for the 36th Brigade to clear its right rear and fill the gap to the river bank. For this purpose the 26th and 82nd Punjabis were withdrawn from the front line and sent to the right. But the Turks hung on with determination to this area, which was a maze of deep canals and water cuts; and it was only after a heavy bombardment by our artillery on the Tigris right bank that they were obliged to surrender to the Punjabis, who took here over 300 prisoners, two guns and five machine guns. The exact hour that this took place is uncertain, but the Punjabis do not appear to have reached the river bank near J.70. until about 11 a.m.

Meanwhile various attempts by the enemy to mass, apparently for counter-attacks, to the left front of the Norfolks and the right front of the Hampshire had been dealt with successfully by our artillery fire.

At 6.30 a.m., a British airman, landing at Advanced General Headquarters (at Sinn), had reported the enemy to be in full retreat towards Baghdad; at 6.45 a.m., the Cavalry Division at R.28. received orders to move towards the Shumran bridge; at 7.50 a.m., General Egerton reported, in answer to a query by IIIrd Corps headquarters, that it was safe to push the Cavalry Division through the 14th Division; and at 9.10 a.m., General Crocker, commanding the Cavalry Division, received a message from General Headquarters saying that the IIIrd Corps was reported at 7.50 to be in possession of the Dahra ridge, that the enemy was apparently in retreat westwards and that the Cavalry Division, crossing the bridge, was to pursue up the left bank of the river as rapidly as possible, maintaining constant communication with General Headquarters.*

In the meantime, at 8.25 a.m., General Egerton heard from the IIIrd Corps that the 55th Brigade, R.F.A., would cross the bridge at once to join the 14th Division, that the 38th Infantry Brigade would move up the Shumran peninsula

* The cavalry had two sets of pack wireless. It is noteworthy that General Marshall, considering a further infantry attack necessary to secure the whole of the Shumran peninsula and some of the ground beyond before the cavalry were let go, wished the 13th Division to cross before the Cavalry Division; but General Maude overruled him.

under 14th Division orders, that the 39th Brigade would concentrate on the right bank near the bridge, that the 9th Brigade would extend to include J.98.–J.100., and that the Corps Cavalry (four squadrons, with attached machine guns and section, R.H.A.) would move up the right river bank beyond J.98. and engage all suitable targets. The message concluded by saying that the Cavalry Division would probably cross the bridge shortly and pass through the 14th Division.

About this time, General Egerton instructed the 35th Brigade to move forward from the southern end of the Shumran peninsula. The brigade advanced and at 10.30 a.m., when in the vicinity of J.82., the 1/5th Buffs and 2/4th Gurkhas were sent forward to fill the gap between H.81. and the right of the 67th Punjabis, protect the left of the Norfolks and clear the enemy from the north-west corner of the Shumran peninsula. These two battalions came up on the right of the 67th Punjabis in the canal H.81.–J.97., where they found themselves faced by heavy fire from machine guns well sited and well concealed in H.83.–H.82. Owing to the many parallel canals which made it very difficult to locate these machine guns, and to the high embankment along the river bank in that vicinity which concealed them from the Corps Cavalry guns and machine guns on the river bank opposite, neither our cavalry nor our artillery were able to give our infantry here the support they required; with the result that little progress was made.

By 10.30 a.m., the 7th Cavalry Brigade, which was leading the Cavalry Division, had moved up the west side of the Shumran peninsula to J.95., having received reports from its patrols that our infantry immediately to the north were still heavily engaged with the enemy; and it was soon clear that the cavalry could not get through here. About 11 a.m., by which time the remainder of the Cavalry Division, which throughout the day remained under General Maude's direct orders, had crossed the river and were about K.60., the 7th Cavalry Brigade sent patrols to find a passage farther to the east. One of these patrols moved northward through the 14th Division at about J.86.; but by 1.30 p.m., it had been driven back by heavy fire from a canal about one thousand yards north of that point and had moved still farther east. At this hour the main body of the 7th Cavalry Brigade, with two horse artillery batteries, was at J.86.; and the remainder of the Cavalry Division were moving up between K.58. and J.85. Twenty minutes later the cavalry patrols found a passage-way via J.73. and H.70., and the 7th Brigade, followed by the

remainder of the Cavalry Division, moved northward by this route, its leading patrol being then about two miles north of J.74. The 7th Cavalry Brigade then swung west-north-west, the 6th Cavalry Brigade coming up on its left; and by 3.15 p.m. the bulk of the Cavalry Division was heavily engaged in dismounted action with an enemy rear guard, estimated about 2,500 strong, well supported by artillery. This rear guard, as the cavalry advanced, took cover in an entrenched canal, which ran roughly parallel to and north-west of, though overlapping, the line H.82.–H.83. Our cavalry right at this time was rather over three miles north of the Dahra ridge and a number of Turkish cavalry were seen by them to the north-west.

In the meantime, 35th Infantry Brigade headquarters with the 37th Dogras and 102nd Grenadiers had moved to the vicinity of H.76. on the Dahra ridge; and at 3.30 p.m., these two battalions were ordered to extend northwards for seven hundred yards from H.76., and then advance westward with their left on the Dahra ridge. This manœuvre met with such heavy rifle and machine gun fire, however, from the direction of H.78., that little progress was made.

At 5 p.m., by which time the Cavalry Division had made very little progress, two armoured cars with it, belonging to the 13th Light Armoured Motor Battery, advanced to test the opposition and, penetrating the enemy's position, did some execution; but one of the cars was disabled by a direct shell hit and both were recalled. General Crocker considered it evident that the enemy was not withdrawing, and, as his men could not advance, he broke off the action at 7 p.m. Leaving patrols to watch the enemy, the Cavalry Division went into bivouac at J.95., which they reached about midnight. The total casualties among officers and men in the Cavalry Division during the day amounted to about 23, in addition to many horses.

At 2 p.m., General Egerton had sent the 38th Brigade orders to be ready to support the 35th Brigade; but it was not actually sent forward. The Cavalry Division was moving to turn the enemy's northern flank; and it seemed to General Egerton that his best plan was to endeavour to pin the Turks to the maze of canals and watercuts, to which they were clinging, so as to give the cavalry a better chance of cutting them off. More especially as communication across the Tigris with our artillery had broken down and consequently effective support by our guns of a determined infantry effort to push home—in any case no easy matter owing to the intricate nature of the country and the mirage—would be very difficult.

During the course of the morning, many reports from aeroplanes and other observers were received showing that, northward of the Shumran bend, large numbers of Turkish troops were moving westward with their transport, both along the road to Baghdad and well north of it. In the evening, about 5.30 p.m., the Ist Corps reported that hostile artillery had been located about seven miles north of Kut, near the "Canal Redoubt"; and it seems possible that the IIIrd Corps staff were correct in the surmise given in their War Diary that these guns had come from Sannaiyat and that the Turkish rear guard had orders to hold back the British at Shumran until this artillery had withdrawn. The action of the enemy rear guard was, in any case, admirable; as it effectually covered the retirement of its main body. Posted apparently at the north-west corner of the Shumran peninsula and in the many canals and watercuts extending northward from there, it had held on tenaciously, making the most of its advantages of ground; and had completely stopped the turning movement of our Cavalry Division.*

Some of our artillery and the remainder of the 13th Division followed, during the day and ensuing night the Cavalry Division across the Tigris bridge; and during the afternoon the Royal Flying Corps devoted their energies, apparently with considerable success, to attacking the retreating enemy and their shipping about Bughaila with bombs and Lewis gun fire.

The day had been fine, but hot; and the infantry of the 14th Division felt increasingly, as the day progressed, the result of their recent exertions. By the afternoon, the men of the 36th and 37th Brigades are said to have been much exhausted. The division had incurred about 1,100 casualties, of which these two brigades had contributed the greater part.†

The Turkish casualties are unknown, but they must have been heavy. The 14th Division took 740 prisoners, including five

* The reasons why the Cavalry Division after crossing the Dahra ridge did not make a longer detour to try and get round the Turkish northern flank are not clear from the records. The Turks had a way of refusing an exposed flank by covering trenches which made it difficult to get round except by a very extended movement; but it is not known if they did so in this instance. General Maude's order to General Crocker to report by wireless to General Headquarters every hour was certainly a handicap; and on the 24th the senior General Staff officer with the Cavalry (Lieutenant-Colonel W. H. Norman) met with an accident, thus depriving the division at a critical stage of its most important staff officer.

† Among the heaviest sufferers were the 1/4th Hampshire with 182 casualties (out of 450 engaged), the 82nd Punjabis with 216 casualties, the 67th Punjabis with 201 and the Norfolks with 140.

Germans belonging to a machine gun company, four guns and several machine guns.

At 6 p.m. General Egerton issued orders that, for the night, the advanced line of the 14th Division (J.70.–J.73.–H.82.–H.83.) was to be held by the 36th and 35th Brigades, the 37th Brigade being withdrawn to concentrate at J.93. The 35th Brigade was instructed to maintain touch with the enemy. It was not till after 9 p.m., however, when the enemy was found to have withdrawn, that the 35th Brigade managed to occupy the line H.82.–H.83. During the night the cavalry patrols, left north of the Dahra ridge, also reported that the enemy, of whom they captured about twenty, had retired.

At Sannaiyat, beyond some sniping on the 28th Brigade front till about 1.30 a.m., the Turks opposite the 7th Division showed little activity during the night of the 23rd/24th. About 2.30 a.m. on the 24th, having relieved the 19th Brigade, the 21st Brigade pushed forward patrols from its leading battalions (2nd Black Watch and 9th Bhopal Infantry), which, meeting with practically no opposition, occupied the enemy's fifth line about 4 a.m. The progress of the 28th Brigade on its right had been slightly delayed by inter-battalion reliefs, but by the time it was beginning to get light* the 51st and 53rd Sikhs had also occupied this fifth line on the right of the 21st Brigade. At 6.35 a.m., General Fane ordered both these brigades to push forward vigorously with strongly supported patrols, on a frontage of about a mile, to the enemy's sixth line, the 19th Brigade being held ready to follow the 28th Brigade. At 7 a.m., artillery batteries were ordered to move forward; and about 7.30 a.m. a message received at Ist Corps headquarters from General Headquarters, quoting an aeroplane report of considerable enemy movement westward and giving instructions for the Ist Corps to press on vigorously, was at once passed on to the 7th Division for compliance.

Soon after 8 a.m., the 21st and then the 28th Brigade occupied the enemy's sixth line, having met little or no opposition; and at 8.35 a.m., General Fane ordered these two brigades not to advance farther till they had secured this line and were in touch with one another. Two minutes later the Ist Corps heard from General Headquarters that the IIIrd Corps had gained the Dahra ridge and that, as there could not be many enemy in front of Sannaiyat, the Ist Corps was to press on with extreme vigour.

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* Sunrise was about 6.40 a.m.

At 9.33 a.m., General Fane ordered the 21st and 28th Brigades to advance with the greatest vigour and, after securing the intermediate position at Nukhailat, occupy the Suwada position, which was some two and three-quarter miles westward of the enemy's sixth and last Sannaiyat line. The 19th Brigade was to follow the 28th Brigade, which was responsible for the right flank. While this order was issuing, however, General Fane heard from the Ist Corps that the 8th Brigade* in Corps reserve had been placed at his disposal for the protection of his right flank; and at 9.50 a.m. he sent this brigade orders to move forward and hold the northern end of the Sannaiyat position.

The 21st and 28th Brigades occupied the Suwada position between 12.45 and 1.30 p.m.; and in the meantime General Fane had ordered the Corps Cavalry (two squadrons 32nd Lancers), then at his disposal, first to Nukhailat and then, about 11.50 a.m., to send strong patrols to clear up the situation towards the Ataba and Suwada marshes and Horse-shoe Lake. An hour later General Fane ordered that, except for bodies supporting the cavalry and patrolling, the 21st and 28th Brigades were not to advance beyond Suwada until the situation had been cleared up and until orders to do so were received from him. At the same time the 19th Brigade (Divisional reserve) was told to halt at Nukhailat and the 8th Brigade to remain about the northern end of the fifth and sixth Sannaiyat lines to guard the right flank.

At 2.55 p.m., the Ist Corps again received instructions to push on with its advance as briskly as possible; and at 3.37 p.m., General Cobbe ordered General Fane to push forward his right vigorously to the line of Turkish trenches linking the Ataba and Suwada marshes and also to send patrols from the Suwada position to Saddleback Hill. The 7th Division issued orders accordingly, the 28th Brigade, supported by the 8th Brigade, being detailed to advance to the Ataba–Suwada line and the 21st Brigade being instructed to send patrols to Saddleback Hill.†

In considering the situation of the 7th Division at this stage, it is necessary to remember that westwards from the Suwada position both the line of the Tigris and the edge of the Suwaikiya marsh diverge rapidly outwards and that both the Ataba and Suwada marshes were practically, if not entirely, dry. The result was that the four infantry brigades of the Ist Corps

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* Three battalions strong; and Corps headquarters said that two of these battalions were to be kept in reserve by General Fane.

† At 3.50 p.m. an observation officer at Chahela reported our cavalry to have reached Saddleback Hill.

found themselves emerging from a defile, in which their flanks had been secure and in which they had been engaged for many months in purely "trench warfare," into country in which "open warfare" precautions would be necessary if opposition was likely. Their men, through unavoidable lack of practice, were not in good marching condition and were, besides, encumbered with all the impedimenta necessary for trench warfare; of "open warfare" and all that it implies, many of their officers, non-commissioned officers and men had no practical experience at all; and they had only two squadrons of cavalry to assist them. The 7th Division had certainly encountered little or no opposition westward of the Sannaiyat position and messages showed that, from aeroplane reports, etc., General Headquarters anticipated little further enemy opposition in this area; but, as was the case always in the featureless plains of Mesopotamia, the maintenance of direction would be difficult, and there were still several strong lines of enemy entrenchments intervening between them and Kut. Moreover, as stated in the 7th Division war diary, it was impossible to be sure whether any particular one of these was or was not being held by the enemy until our patrols actually entered it. The commander of the 7th Division, therefore, felt that an orderly advance was necessary to ensure that his brigades kept touch with one another and also that the ground to his front, between each captured line and the next one, was covered by patrols pushed well ahead before the main advance was begun. No details are available of the progress of the Turkish retirement from Sannaiyat; but it appears to have started before daybreak and to have been carried out rapidly, so that it is possible that the enemy was in any case safe early in the day from infantry pursuit.

Just before 5 p.m., General Cobbe paid a visit to 7th Divisional headquarters opposite Bait Isa and discussed the situation with General Fane. Only about an hour of daylight remained* and no further substantial advance seemed feasible. At 9 p.m., the infantry brigades of the Ist Corps were disposed generally as follows:—

28th Brigade .. .. 8th Brigade (less one battalion).	Ataba–Suwada line.
21st Brigade	Suwada position, with patrols at Saddleback Hill.

* Sunset was about 5.50 p.m.

19th Brigade	.. ..	Nukhailat position.*
7th Brigade	.. ..	Concentrated near Pentagon on the Dujaila depression.
One battalion, 8th Brigade		The Narrows.
9th Brigade	.. ..	West of the Hai on the line A.A.10. – N.57. – J.100. – J.98 and guarding the Shumran bridge. Under orders to revert to the Ist Corps.

During the day the Ist Corps incurred only 29 casualties, all in the 7th Division, and captured 62 prisoners, three *minenwerfer* and one machine gun.

Soon after 7 a.m. on the 24th February Captain Nunn, the Senior Naval Officer, had proposed to General Maude that his gunboat flotilla (*Mantis, Tarantula, Moth, Butterfly, Gadfly* and *Snakefly*) should move up the Tigris. This was agreed to early in the afternoon and the gunboats proceeded upstream, encountering some floating mines which they easily avoided, and anchored off Kut about 9.30 p.m.

Kut town was found deserted next morning and in ruins; and a party from the *Mantis* landed and hoisted the Union Jack.

As General Maude telegraphed on the evening of the 24th February in his daily progress report: "As a result of these operations we now have the whole of the enemy's positions from Sannaiyat to Kut; and Kut itself to which no interest but a sentimental one attaches, passes automatically into our hands, though we have not yet actually occupied it. We have also secured navigation of river up to Shumran."

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* The war diary of the Seaforths says: "We bivouacked in the open on luxurious green grass, all ranks though tired enjoying the change after so many months of monotonous trench warfare."

CHAPTER XXXII.

PURSUIT: THE BRITISH REACH AZIZIYA.

(MAPS 22 AND 24.)

ON the 24th February, at 7.25 p.m., General Maude issued orders for pursuing operations next day. There was no doubt that the Turkish main force was in full retreat up the Tigris, though its rear guard had been able so far to check the advance of our Cavalry and 14th Divisions. The Cavalry Division was ordered to move off at six o'clock next morning and operate round the enemy's northern flank, while one of the IIIrd Corps divisions, starting at the same hour, pushed up the Tigris left bank, along the route which lack of water inland would compel the enemy main force to follow. The second division of the IIIrd Corps would be held in readiness to move westward when required; the Senior Naval Officer was asked to co-operate in the movement with his flotilla; and the Ist Corps was to complete the clearance of the battlefields on both banks of the Tigris and Hai as far as the western side of the Shumran peninsula. Up to this point the Tigris was now open to our shipping.

General Maude sent the following telegram that evening to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff:—

> " In view of change brought about in situation by recent successes on Tigris front, I shall be glad to learn whether H.M. Government in any way desire to modify their instructions conveyed to me in your telegram of 30th September 1916.*
>
> " Until I get your reply I do not propose to delay, but intend to follow up retreating enemy closely; being careful, however, to do nothing which will prevent me from adjusting my position readily according to your further orders.
>
> " Enemy has suffered very severely during past two and a half months, and his losses have been out of all proportion to his strength. Also we have captured 4,500 prisoners, besides guns and machine guns, rifles, ammunition and material. This series of reverses would have completely broken troops possessed of less fighting qualities than the Turks. Opportunity would, therefore, seem favourable for further advance, if this accords with policy of H.M.

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* See page 47.

Government. Scope of such advance would depend on information received as to further enemy reinforcements being diverted in this direction. Owing, however, to heavy losses already incurred by Turkish forces as above, these—unless considerably more than we anticipate at present—have now lost much of their value."

During the night of the 24th/25th February, the Turkish rear guard was reported, both by the 35th Infantry Brigade and the patrols of the Cavalry Division, to have withdrawn from its positions of the 24th. Although, in both cases, touch with the enemy had been lost, General Maude still hoped, by vigorous action on the part of his cavalry, to deal the Turks further heavy blows before they got out of reach; and this hope was sustained by the reports next morning of the British aeroplanes, which said that the retiring Turkish main body was about Bughaila, covered by a rear guard of some 1,500 rifles with 17 to 20 guns which occupied a canal extending northwards from the river near Imam Mahdi.

Muhammad Amin in his account* says that, in the early hours of the 25th February, the XVIII Corps, now composed of about 10,000 fighting men, including the weak 4th and 14th Divisions,† arrived at the position supposed to have been prepared near Qala Shadi. There it occupied an old disused canal, which for the most part had not been prepared for defence, and where, in spite of extreme fatigue, it worked till the morning at entrenchments.

At 6 a.m., on the 25th, the advanced guard of the 13th Division ("D" Squadron 1/1st Hertfordshire Yeomanry, 66th Brigade, R.F.A., 72nd Company, R.E., and 38th Infantry Brigade) started, from the Shumran peninsula, to advance up the Tigris left bank.‡ The Cavalry Division, being delayed to draw rations, § started three-quarters of an hour later and moved well to the north of the 13th Division.

About 10.30 a.m., the Hertfordshire Yeomanry, who had gained contact with the Turkish rear guard posted in a canal

* "Baghdad and the Story of its Last Fall."

† Only the 41st and part of the 64th Regiments of the 14th Division seem to have reached the Tigris front by this time, the 149th Regiment being apparently still *en route*.

‡ The IIIrd Corps 60-pounders had not yet crossed the Tigris and by a mistake, the Corps general staff officer detailed for *liaison* with the 13th Division, who had received General Marshall's special instructions on the operations to be carried out, was ordered to go back and expedite the move of the 60-pounders to the front.

§ Rations did not arrive till 5 a.m., and Indian ranks had even then no time to cook.

running roughly north-north-east from the north-west corner of the Husaini bend, received orders to contain the enemy there until our infantry arrived ; and, pushing forward dismounted, drove the enemy out of some advanced posts, apparently in front of the Turkish left, which the Yeomanry occupied. At 11 a.m., the head of the 38th Brigade reached the north-east corner of the Husaini bend and came under fairly heavy Turkish shell fire. One of the 66th Field Artillery Brigade batteries, which was with the vanguard, at once pushed forward and came into action against the Turkish guns, enabling the leading battalions of the 38th Infantry Brigade to continue their advance and drive in the enemy's advanced posts, southward of the line occupied by the Hertfordshire Yeomanry. The naval flotilla, *Tarantula* (S.N.O.), *Mantis*, *Moth*, *Gadfly* and *Butterfly*, having passed through the Shumran bridge about 8 a.m., had also arrived and were co-operating with their guns in the 38th Brigade attack. By 12.30 p.m., however, the 38th Brigade advanced line—6th King's Own, 6th East Lancashire and 6th Loyal North Lancashire, in this order from the right—had been definitely checked by heavy rifle and machine gun fire some seven hundred yards from the enemy's trenches and was beginning to dig itself in. At this hour the fourth battalion of the brigade, the 6th South Lancashire, was sent to the right to try and turn the enemy's left flank. Passing through the line of the Hertfordshire Yeomanry, this battalion effected a lodgment in a section of the enemy's line about a mile and a half north of the Tigris bank, but found itself still south of the enemy's left flank. In this position, with barricades on either flank, it remained for the rest of the day in constant combat until the enemy withdrew after dark.

It being evident that the 38th Brigade alone could not make much further progress, at 2 p.m. the 39th Brigade was ordered to move to the right and attack the enemy's left flank. Advancing accordingly, its first line, 9th Worcestershire, 7th Gloucestershire and 7th North Staffordshire*—in this order from the right—captured the portion of the canal line held by the enemy left a little way north of the South Lancashire. A hasty reconnaissance of the area here—rough and much intersected by watercuts—showed that the enemy was holding a second line in a canal about six hundred yards westward of, and roughly parallel to, the line just captured ; and only part of this second line appeared to be entrenched.

* 9th Royal Warwickshire were in rear in reserve.

Wasting no time, the 39th Brigade attacked this second line with great dash and gallantry, with the effective support of the 55th and 66th Field Artillery Brigades. This artillery, some of which came into action within twelve hundred yards of the enemy, was very well and gallantly handled; but, having to move across and come into action in the open, it was at a considerable disadvantage as compared with the Turkish guns, which were firing from well concealed gun-pits. The naval guns also co-operated with good effect. In the advance the Worcestershire on the right met with little resistance and incurred but few casualties; in the centre the Gloucestershire, advancing against a portion of the canal which had been entrenched, encountered more opposition; and on the left the North Staffordshire, coming under heavy enfilade gun, machine gun and rifle fire from their left, had the hardest task of all, the Turks before them only giving way at the point of the bayonet. Owing, however, to the rapidity with which the attack was carried through, the British casualties were less than might have been expected; and the 39th Brigade captured the position, bayoneting or taking prisoner a number of Turks.

The enemy was found to be holding still another canal several hundred yards in rear of his second line. But the 39th Brigade was not to be denied; and it pushed straight on and captured this line also, taking prisoners to the number of seven or eight hundred. The Turks at once opened a heavy artillery fire* on this captured line and launched a counter-attack against the left of the North Staffordshire, whose flank was in the air; many of the captured prisoners managed to re-arm themselves and to attack the North Staffordshire, causing considerable confusion in the trenches; and the fading light obliged the British supporting artillery to curtail, and then cease, their barrage; with the result that the North Staffordshire, and a company of the Gloucestershire on their right, were driven back. The remainder of the British line stood fast and the Turkish counter-attack was repulsed, the Staffordshire again advancing to occupy the ground lost. Fighting continued till about 2 a.m., when the Turks withdrew, leaving many killed and wounded behind,† as well as 334 prisoners still remaining in the hands of the 39th Brigade.

At about 6 p.m. the 40th Brigade was moved to the right rear of the 39th Brigade with a view to operating on that flank

* The Turkish rear guard is said to have fired during the day an unprecedented amount of shell.

† The 13th Division found 300 Turkish dead and 40 wounded next morning.

next morning; but was withdrawn again about three hours later to the vicinity of Divisional Headquarters.

The 14th Division, which had been patrolling actively throughout the night of the 24th/25th, concentrated at 7 a.m. on the 25th to the north of the Shumran peninsula, ready to move when ordered. These orders, which instructed it to march at 3 p.m., were received at 11.45 a.m. At 4.30 p.m., while advancing, a staff officer, who had been sent forward to the 13th Division to ascertain the situation, rejoined the 14th Division; and in consequence of what he then heard, General Egerton ordered his 35th Brigade to push on to help the 13th Division if necessary. The 13th Division commander, however, said that he did not require assistance; and at 6 p.m., the 14th Division went into bivouac just east of 13th Division headquarters.

The 13th Division casualties during the 25th February totalled 556, of which almost all had been incurred by the 38th and 39th Brigades.* During the afternoon the division had seen the guns of the Cavalry Division in action to the north-west and it had been hoped that the cavalry would be able to close in on the enemy's rear. Unfortunately, however, as will be seen below, the cavalry operations had no decisive effect.

The naval flotilla had been in action throughout the day and, although all the gunboats had been hit by enemy shell, had sustained no serious damage and only one casualty among its personnel.

The Cavalry Division, advancing on a wide front—the 7th Cavalry Brigade on the right, Divisional Troops in the centre and 6th Cavalry Brigade on the left—reached by 11.30 a.m. a position about four miles north-east of Imam Mahdi. It was facing westward, and the 7th Brigade, somewhat in advance and to the north-west of the 6th Brigade, was ordered to close on the latter; but owing to a misunderstanding this took some time. At about 1 p.m., when about four miles north-north-west of Imam Mahdi, the 6th Brigade was ordered to wheel to the left and advance on Imam Mahdi, while the 7th Brigade was told to conform to the movement on the right of the 6th Brigade. Some three-quarters of an hour later, when about two and a half miles north of Imam Mahdi, the 21st Cavalry, leading the 6th Brigade, was checked by fire, and the remainder of the brigade came under shell fire,

* The heaviest sufferers were the 7th North Staffordshire with 144 casualties, the 6th East Lancashire with 120, the 7th Gloucestershire with 111, and the 6th South Lancashire with 77. The 55th Brigade, R.F.A., also lost 20 men.

from a position to the south. The 21st started to attack dismounted, while three other squadrons (one 14th Hussars and two 22nd Cavalry) were ordered to move to the right to try and work round the enemy's flank. Meanwhile, in lieu of its previous orders, the 7th Brigade had been directed to join in the attack in prolongation of the left of the 6th Brigade. The 13th Hussars and 13th Lancers accordingly advanced dismounted and the whole line gradually moved forward. It was estimated that they were being opposed by at least 1,000 infantry entrenched and well supported by artillery, whose fire definitely checked our cavalry about two miles north of Imam Mahdi.* At 2.30 p.m., General Crocker received instructions by wireless from General Maude that the Cavalry Division was to operate at once against the Turkish bridge at Bughaila; and orders were accordingly issued to both cavalry brigades to break off the action and concentrate preparatory to moving on Bughaila. This was, however, found to be impossible as the regiments were too closely engaged, and it was only with difficulty that they were finally extricated and concentrated about 5.30 p.m. In this operation the six cars of the 13th Light Armoured Motor Battery, which had been working with the cavalry since midday, gave valuable assistance.

There was now less than half an hour to sunset, men and horses were much fatigued and there was no water nearer than the Tigris. General Crocker decided to withdraw eastwards and the Cavalry Division moved back for ten or twelve miles, bivouacking, just before midnight, on the Tigris bank near 13th Division Headquarters. During the day the cavalry casualties had totalled 69 (61 in the 7th Cavalry Brigade), in addition to a number of horses.

Muhammad Amin, in a brief reference to the fighting described above, says that the Turkish XVIII Corps had not succeeded in fully preparing its position when it was attacked on the morning of the 25th February; and that, though its front was outflanked from the left in the afternoon, the resistance of the 51st Division and the lack of determination on the part of the enemy enabled the Corps to extricate itself and to continue its retirement during the night to a point twenty miles upstream.

Although Muhammad Amin does not specifically say which portion of the British pursuing force he considers lacking in determination, indications point to the Cavalry Division as

* The British cavalry regiments were all a good deal below establishment and had lost many horses.

being implied. It is clear that General Maude expected his cavalry to reach Bughaila by the evening of the 25th. But in justice to the cavalry it is necessary to bear in mind that the defensive power of modern armament restricts greatly the offensive capacity of cavalry; that Mesopotamia was never an easy country to operate in; that General Maude's stringent orders to communicate with him every hour hampered initiative; and that to have cut off the Turkish rear guard and at the same time to have reached water meant interposing the Cavalry Division between the Turkish rear guard and the enemy's main body in a position open to attack from two or more directions.

British aeroplanes followed up the retreating Turks all day, making many apparently effective attacks with Lewis guns and bombs, of which they dropped a total of 94 on various targets, including shipping. But there was still only one air squadron in Mesopotamia, as, owing to more urgent demands elsewhere, the War Office had been unable to grant General Maude's requests for even one additional flight; and there was much other work for the aeroplanes with General Maude to do. That evening, however, they achieved a notable and definite success, when the Turks attempted to tow their boat-bridge upstream from Bughaila; for the bombs of our aeroplanes caused the steamer to slip its tow, thus sending the boats adrift downstream.

At this stage the reorganisation of the administrative and maintenance arrangements of the line of communications gave an adequate return for all the care and trouble that had been taken during the last ten months. The advance of the army across and up the left bank of the Tigris meant that all ammunition, supplies and stores could no longer be sent up by railway from Shaikh Saad but had to come up by the river with its many bends to Shumran and thence to the troops by land transport, while the casualties had also to be sent back in the same way. But, in spite of this sudden and complete change of system, all the arrangements worked admirably; men and animals were kept well supplied; and the evacuation of the wounded proceeded without a hitch.

During the 25th February, in order to keep off the Arabs, the Ist Corps took up a line from the Ataba marsh, along the Dahra canal, to and across the north of the Shumran peninsula and thence, on the Tigris right bank, in a curve back to the Hai at A.A.10; and it also carried out clearance of the battlefield.

At 9.25 p.m. on the 25th, General Headquarters at Sinn sent out telegraphic orders for next day's operations. These

orders, after summarising briefly the situation of the enemy's rear guard so far as known and stating that the remainder of his force was disposed in depth between his rear guard and Bughaila, covering the evacuation of his guns and stores, instructed the IIIrd Corps, supported by all available artillery, to continue westwards and press the enemy strongly, while the Cavalry Division, working wide to the north, was to operate against the enemy's rear in the direction of Bughaila. Separate orders were issued to the Royal Flying Corps to co-operate in various ways; and the Ist Corps was if possible to complete on the 26th the clearance of the Sannaiyat–Hai–Shumran battlefield.

To carry out these instructions, the IIIrd Corps issued orders for the 13th Division to advance next day at 6 a.m., along the river bank and press the enemy westwards, and for the 14th Division—with the Corps Cavalry, two Horse Artillery guns and the 134th Brigade, R.F.A.—to start at 4 a.m., and move to the northward so as to intercept the enemy's line of retreat north of Bughaila. To do this, General Egerton (14th Division) decided to advance by the track, some two and a half miles north of the river, which led to Aziziya; thus hoping to get behind the enemy.

At 4 a.m. on the 26th February the 35th Brigade moved off, being followed about two hours later by the remainder of the 14th Division and by the Corps Cavalry, who overtook the 35th Brigade and then covered its advance. At 6 a.m., the 13th Division started up the Tigris bank, and a little later the Cavalry Division also moved off, in a north-westerly direction.* The enemy rear guard had been reported by the advanced line of the 13th Division to have evacuated during the night its previous day's position, but it was unknown how far it had retired. The men and horses of the Cavalry Division had had little rest during the previous forty-eight hours and were very tired, as were also a large part of the 13th Division as the result of their exertions on the 25th. The 14th Division was fresher and in its keenness to get behind the enemy started off at a good pace.

Beyond two hostile aeroplanes which passed over, no enemy was sighted during the morning, and the 14th Division, with the Cavalry Division to the north of it, kept up a good pace, sending a staff officer at 9.15 a.m. to inform the Cavalry Division that it was moving on Sumar, a point on the river bank about eight miles north-north-west of Bughaila. By 2.15 p.m., the

* The cavalry were a little delayed by having to pass through the 14th Division column.

Cavalry Division* had reached a point about eleven miles due north of Bughaila and the 14th Division was then about half way between the Cavalry Division and Shaikh Jaad (or Qala Shadi).

In the meantime, the 13th Division, whose progress, though unopposed, was slow, had passed through the previous day's battlefield, where along the track it came across several Turkish wounded, many dead, one Turkish 5·9-inch gun and much gun and rifle ammunition, as well as other abandoned material. Imam Mahdi was reached at 11 a.m., and Shaikh Jaad not long after. Here the Division halted before resuming its advance about 1 p.m., when the 38th Brigade was directed to move along the river bank to Bughaila, while the remainder kept to the main westward track so as to be in a position to support either the 38th Brigade or the 14th Division.

At 3 p.m., the Horse Artillery guns with the Corps Cavalry were shelling a few Turks seen to the north of the Nahr al Kalek bend; the 35th Brigade was advancing to deal with some two to three hundred Turks reported moving up the river bank to the south-east of Sumar; the main body of the 14th Division was about four miles north-north-west of Shaikh Jaad; and General Egerton was sending the 13th Field Artillery Brigade to join the Corps Cavalry and get into action as fast as possible against the retreating Turks. About 3.30 p.m., the Cavalry Division, when about six miles north-north-west of Sumar, came under shell fire from the direction of the Nahr al Kalek bend and sent the 6th Cavalry Brigade to push southward and endeavour to find the enemy's flank.† From a small mound Cavalry Headquarters could see the enemy in the distance streaming north-westward towards Aziziya under the fire of our naval flotilla.

The Navy had at last got their chance and, as will be seen, took full advantage of it. As reports came in during the morning, General Maude realised that the Turkish main body and possibly even his rear guard had evaded successfully infantry, if not cavalry, pursuit; and he asked the Senior Naval Officer to push on with his flotilla and inflict as much damage on the retreating enemy as possible. Captain Nunn at once proceeded upstream at full speed, *Tarantula* (S.N.O.) leading, then *Mantis*

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* At 11.15 a.m. General Crocker had left to go to General Headquarters, handing over command to General Jones, commanding 7th Cavalry Brigade.

† Five cars of the 13th Light Armoured Motor Battery, in an attack on Turkish trenches, got stuck in heavy ground, one car having to be abandoned under fire; but only for the night.

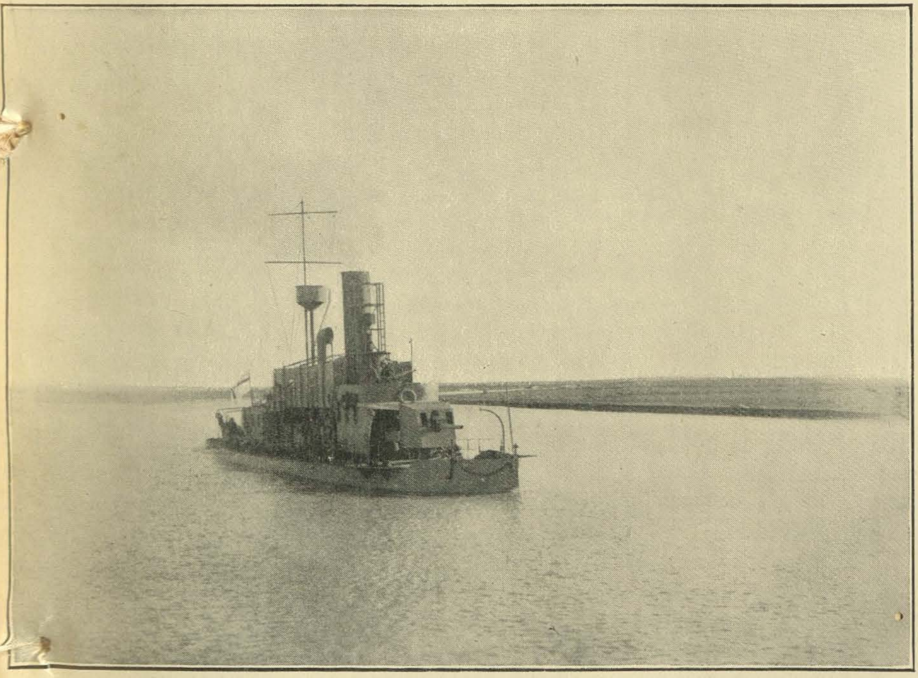
and *Moth*, with *Gadfly* and *Butterfly* following. Just after passing Bughaila, with white flags flying over it, at 2 p.m., the gunboats began to overtake numbers of enemy stragglers on the left bank, and these, holding up their hands as a sign of surrender, were sent back to be taken by the troops. Some Turkish guns, partly submerged in the river, were also passed; and it was not long before the smoke of steamers was sighted in the distance. It was soon possible to distinguish several of these, including the *Firefly*,* renamed by the Turks *Suliman Pak*, and the armed ship *Pioneer*; and as they came within range the British guns opened a heavy fire on them, to which they both replied, the *Firefly* making good shooting with her 4-inch gun.

Larger numbers of Turks retreating on the left bank were overtaken; and, as his ship approached the Nahr al Kalek bend, Captain Nunn observed on the left bank at the head of the bend a large body of the enemy on which he ordered all guns to fire. This was the enemy rear guard entrenched at the apex of the complete hairpin turn, which the river makes here; and in which for some miles, owing to its narrow width, the ships would be under gun, machine gun and rifle fire from three directions at the shortest of ranges. The risk of going aground in the unknown channel and thus blocking the fairway was also considerable. But Captain Nunn did not hesitate and steamed on, coming under very heavy fire to which his ships replied with all their armament. The enemy fire, at ranges averaging one hundred to five hundred yards, inflicted many casualties among our naval personnel, although our own fire must also have had considerable effect on the Turks. The quartermaster and pilot in the conning tower of the *Mantis* were both killed, though the prompt action of her commander saved her from running on shore; but the *Moth*, which was last in the line, suffered most severely. Finely handled by her commander (Lieutenant-Commander C. H. A. Cartwright), she was hit eight times by shell which pierced one of her boilers and holed her below the water line, while four out of her five officers and half her remaining complement were killed or wounded. But she still managed to keep going.

Having passed the Turkish rear guard, the ships overtook the rear of the enemy's main body within very short range and opened a rapid fire on it with every available weapon with very great effect. The Turks appeared to be utterly demoralised by this fire, as they made little attempt to reply to it; and, in

* Abandoned with a disabled boiler at Umm at Tubul on the 1st December 1915, see Vol. II., p. 121.

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A gunboat of the "Fly" class on the Tigris.

addition to other casualties, many of their gun teams were shot down and the guns abandoned, falling later on into the hands of our infantry.

The Turkish vessels ahead were, by now, within easy range and many of them stopped and surrendered, including the armed tug *Sumana*, which the Turks had taken on the surrender of Kut. About 5.20 p.m., the steamer *Basra*, with several hundred enemy wounded, a few of our own wounded who had been taken prisoner in the recent fighting and some unwounded Turks and Germans, stopped in reply to a shell from the *Tarantula* and was run ashore under the direction of a wounded British officer.* The *Firefly* kept up a heavy fire for a little time longer, but, being hit several times, the Turks set fire to her magazine and ran her ashore. This fire, however, was put out before it could penetrate the magazine, a prize crew was put on board and the white ensign was hoisted in her once more, only a few miles above the point where she had been lost fifteen months earlier. The *Pioneer*, in flames from a hit by *Mantis*, and several barges full of munitions were also abandoned close by. By this time it was getting dark, the gunboats were far ahead of our troops and the Turkish main body barely out of range ; so Captain Nunn decided to go no further and his flotilla anchored for the night.

This action of the Navy had the effect of turning the orderly retreat of the rear of the Turkish army into a panic-stricken flight, as was clear from the spectacle that met our aeroplanes and advancing troops next morning. The road and adjacent areas were littered with dead and wounded men and animals, guns, arms of all sorts, ammunition, wagons and stores ; while in the rear of the Turkish army toiled numbers of men in small groups, exhausted, starving and supplicating our aeroplanes for rescue from the marauding Arabs. No sign remained that this was the fine army which had held us in check for over a year.

In the meantime the 6th Cavalry Brigade with the armoured cars, in an attempt to get round the outer flank of the Turkish rear guard, had met with no success, being checked by a part of the enemy rear guard in position on some sandhills in rear of the Turkish northern flank and also by the fire of our own naval guns which was sweeping the cavalry front.† About 6.15 p.m., the 6th Cavalry Brigade was withdrawn and with the rest of

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* Lieutenant Cowie of the Black Watch.

† Attempts to inform the naval flotilla of the situation by heliograph were unsuccessful.

the Cavalry Division went into bivouac about three miles north of the Nahr al Kalek bend. Their casualties had been very light; but they had covered considerable distances during the day and men and horses were much fatigued.

The 14th Division had maintained its pace throughout the afternoon, but, though its infantry covered in some cases 25 miles during the day, it failed to get within effective distance of the Turkish rear guard; and at nightfall went into bivouac about four miles south-eastward of the enemy's position. The 38th Brigade, arriving at Bughaila about 5 p.m., halted there as Corps Reserve, while the remainder of the 13th Division, reaching a point on the Tigris bank about three miles northward of Bughaila, bivouacked there for the night. The 14th Division had picked up about sixty Turkish stragglers, while the Navy and the 13th Division between them took over two hundred more prisoners, exclusive of those in the *Basra* and other river craft.

Muhammad Amin in "Baghdad and the Story of its Last Fall," says that the Turkish XVIII Corps arrived at the Nahr al Kalek bend on the morning of the 26th and took up a pre-arranged position, though no digging had been done there beforehand. He continues: "In the afternoon it (i.e., XVIII Corps) sustained the attack of the hostile cavalry on its left flank and rear and of the hostile river fleet on its right flank. The courageous attack of the British naval forces played havoc with the rear of the Corps. The *Suliman Pak* and *Tugan* gunboats and *Kut al Amara* motor boat were destroyed [*sic*]; 1,500 wounded, much equipment, the *Basra* river boat and about ten barges were either captured or destroyed. One force of hostile cavalry made for Aziziya, another enveloped the left flank and created great consternation in Corps Headquarters. The Commander realised that his communications would be cut and retired to Aziziya during the night 26th/27th February."

Muhammad Amin also says that Halil, the Sixth Army commander, who retired to Baghdad on the 26th, abandoned all hope of holding Baghdad and sent a peremptory telegram to the XIII Corps commander to bring his Corps to Khaniqin.

On the 26th February General Maude issued orders that the Ist Corps was to concentrate by daybreak next day at the north-west corner of the Shumran peninsula and that the Inspector-General of Communications and the General Officer Commanding Tigris Defences were to take over the line of communications up to Shumran on the 27th. The blockhouse

line between Shaikh Saad and the Hai, as well as bridgeheads west of the Hai, were to be maintained for the time being ;* depots and the Shumran bridge were to be protected ; and posts were to be established at the northern ends of the Kut and Maqasis peninsulas, in the Suwada position and at Arab Village. To assist the Tigris Defences in this extension of their responsibilities, the Ist Corps was told to transfer temporarily two battalions of infantry.

About 10 p.m., on the 26th, General Headquarters issued the following orders for next day :—

> " Cavalry Division and IIIrd Corps to stand fast till further orders unless enemy are still in their vicinity to-morrow, in which case they should act on their own initiative and capture them. Information gained by aeroplane reconnaissance at daybreak to-morrow will be dropped on both these formations."

This reconnaissance reported that about 2,000 enemy were still round Aziziya.

It appears, from Muhammad Amin's account, that the Turkish Army commander had promised Kara Bekr Bey, the XVIII Corps commander, that rations for his Corps would be sent to Aziziya from Baghdad. But on arrival at Aziziya early on the 27th the weary and hungry XVIII Corps found neither a prepared position for it to hold nor any rations ; although it managed to secure a boat-load of grain in a more or less soaking condition. Halil had sent a steamer with stores to Ctesiphon ; but the German mechanical transport sent with rations to Aziziya had, owing to the fear of the British approach, gone no further than Lajj, where they stacked the rations and returned to Baghdad. Muhammad Amin continues :

> " The fear of the enemy's approach was not confined to these mechanical transport drivers alone, but affected all the German personnel. Five days before this, that is on the day when the enemy crossed to the left bank, all the German hopes of stopping the enemy had disappeared. I myself was a spectator of the panic which seized the Germans. While the XVIII Corps was still holding on desperately at Shumran and the enemy was still one hundred miles from Baghdad, a panic-stricken stream was flowing north to Samarra."

Early on the 27th February, the Cavalry Division advanced towards Aziziya, the 14th Lancers of the 7th Cavalry Brigade

* There was a considerable accumulation of stores in this area which had to be cleared.

forming advanced screen. Observing a Turkish hospital near the river bank, the main body of the 7th Brigade with Divisional Headquarters turned off to take it. General Holland-Pryor* asked and obtained permission to continue the pursuit with his 6th Cavalry Brigade and the 14th Lancers. Moving through the enemy's positions of the previous day, the 7th Cavalry Brigade found a large number of stragglers, seven guns and much other abandoned material. Examination of this area took till about 3.45 p.m., when the 7th moved forward to support the 6th Cavalry Brigade.

At 10.30 a.m. General Maude sent the Cavalry Division instructions that, beyond the local investigations it was carrying out, it was to make no further advance till ordered to do so, and at 6.35 p.m. General Crocker† was told that the Cavalry Division and IIIrd Corps were to stand fast till further orders.

In the meantime the 14th Lancers and 6th Cavalry Brigade, proceeding unopposed and seeing no enemy, had halted six miles from Aziziya, where from a mound about one hundred feet high they could see the town and were also able to get into communication by heliograph with the naval flotilla. They then continued their advance till, at 6.20 p.m., their advanced guard came under shell fire when about three miles south-east of Aziziya. The 14th Hussars were sent to the right flank, while the 22nd Cavalry advanced dismounted to the front, to locate the enemy and ascertain his strength.

At 9 p.m., while he was still awaiting reports from these two regiments, General Holland-Pryor received orders to rejoin the Cavalry Division which had gone into bivouac at nightfall about eight miles south-east of Aziziya; but he asked for permission to remain where he was and that ration carts might be sent up to him. This was agreed to; and about 10 p.m. he received reports from his front. First a patrol of the 14th Hussars returned, reporting that it had got into Aziziya, having been fired upon by about twenty-five men, and then a message came in from the 22nd Cavalry reporting that they had been heavily fired on when within two hundred yards of Aziziya by about 250 enemy infantry in position. Nothing more could be done that night, as the ground was very broken and difficult to work over in the dark; the 14th Hussars and 22nd Cavalry were recalled; and the brigade went into bivouac where it was,

* On arrival from India, he had taken over command about twenty-four hours previously.

† He had rejoined his command that day.

having suffered only a few casualties, practically all in the 22nd Cavalry. The 6th Cavalry Brigade commander sent to Divisional Headquarters representing that a mounted attack would probably be successful at dawn; but at 1 a.m. he received orders* to rejoin the Division at daybreak.

During the 27th February the Navy made no further advance, the *Tarantula* and *Mantis* remaining near the spot they had reached the previous day. The *Moth* and *Firefly* were sent to Basra for repairs and the prizes were sent downstream. The *Firefly*, recommissioned under her former commander, Lieutenant-Commander Eddis, with a temporary crew, soon returned to the front in fairly good working order.

The IIIrd Corps closed up during the day in accordance with orders received, the 14th Division camping at night three miles north-west of the Nahr al Kalek bend and Corps headquarters being established at Bughaila. Soon after midday the Ist Corps received orders to move to Shaikh Jaad and to piquet the road between Shumran and that locality to keep off the hordes of marauding Arabs. The 7th Division moved to Shaikh Jaad in the afternoon, while two brigades of the 3rd Division piquetted the road as ordered; the third brigade was to move to Shaikh Jaad next morning.† In the afternoon General Maude with Advanced General Headquarters embarked in a river steamer and moved up to Shumran. That evening, in his daily telegraphic progress report to London and India, General Maude said that he had to pause, but he hoped only for a few days, to reorganise his communications, which had been slightly dislocated by the change of system of supply. By the time this had been done, he expected to receive the Government's instructions, which the whole force trusted would impose on it further offensive operations against the beaten enemy.

General Maude had been very anxious to push on at once in pursuit of the retreating Turks,‡ though his Chief of General Staff and his Quartermaster-General considered that the small amount of transport available was insufficient to keep the force supplied either with ammunition or food. On the afternoon of the 27th February, as General Maude was moving his

* The Turks abandoned that night near Aziziya several guns, which the cavalry found on the 2nd March.

† The whole of the 9th Brigade of the 3rd Division had eventually to be placed temporarily at the disposal of the General Officer Commanding Tigris Defences for line of communication defence.

‡ He had received a private telegram from Sir William Robertson implying that he was expected to exploit his success as much as possible.

advanced headquarters from Sinn to Shumran, General MacMunn, the Inspector-General of Communications, arrived at General Headquarters, having come post-haste from Amara as soon as he heard of the successful Tigris crossing. Finding that General MacMunn felt, even more strongly than they did, that from a supply point of view a premature advance would be a grave mistake, the two staff officers asked him to use his influence to persuade General Maude to make a pause.

General MacMunn at once had an interview with General Maude and explained the situation fully, saying that if the army advanced at once, it would not be long before it would be bound to halt. Its subsequent supply situation would then be much worse than if it halted at once to allow of a proper reorganisation. He (General MacMunn) had had no warning that an advance towards Baghdad was imminent and he was consequently not specially prepared for it. Although he had sufficient steamers in the country, he must have a few days in which to regroup them and to make arrangements for a succession of temporary "riverheads" and supply dumps. The advanced base at Shaikh Saad, though by land less than 150 miles from Baghdad, was 144 miles by river from Aziziya and 255 miles from Baghdad; and it was on the river that he would have to depend for his main line of supply. He would be further hampered in using this by the prevailing flood condition of the Tigris, in which the current was so strong that steamers had to battle against it, sometimes for hours, at each bend. Moreover, there was a large accumulation of stores on the Hai, which, as the available land transport would be required with the advancing army, would have to be sent back by the light railway to Shaikh Saad; and this would detain a considerable part of the supply staff, whose services would thus be temporarily lost to the new main line of supply.

General Maude asked General MacMunn for how long he wished the halt to be made and received the answer that, if the advance was delayed till the 5th March, he was prepared to give assurance by then of a sufficient and constant supply for as far as he wanted to go.* To this General Maude finally agreed.

At 3.30 a.m., on the 28th February General Maude sent instructions to the Cavalry Division saying that supply

* H.M. Government were anxious at this time that there should be no repetition of the supply failure: and to reassure them, Sir John Cowans, the Quartermaster-General at the War Office, telegraphed privately to General MacMunn and obtained his confirmation of the adequacy of the supply arrangements.

steamers could not be sent beyond a point about three miles below the Nahr al Kalek bend, where they were to be unloaded and at once sent back downstream. Subject to this proviso, which he emphasised strongly, General Maude had no objection to the Cavalry Division going to Aziziya. But under no circumstances was it to go further. As by this time Aziziya was reported to be clear of the enemy and as an advance thither meant transporting his rations twenty-eight miles by land from the ships, General Crocker decided to withdraw and camp about five miles north-west of the Nahr al Kalek bend. As he withdrew he brought back, in accordance with orders, all the abandoned Turkish material he could carry in his ration carts and destroyed the remainder.

During the 28th, the greater part of the Ist Corps closed up to Shaikh Jaad and the IIIrd Corps stood fast. That evening, in his daily telegram reporting progress to London and India, General Maude said that his supply situation had been carefully worked out and was assured. Under the existing conditions this assurance meant a fine feat of organisation by the Inspector-General of Communications and the various directors working under him; and was an achievement of which they and their officers and men might well be proud.

By this date messages of congratulation on his success were pouring in on General Maude from the King, the War Cabinet and many others in Great Britain and other parts of the Empire and other theatres of war, as well as from our Allies; and it was a source of considerable gratification to the whole force to see these in an Order of the Day published by General Maude, together with his own replies.

General Maude, writing to General Whigham (Deputy Chief of the Imperial General Staff) on the 28th February, gave a brief account of the recent operations and said that he had to halt to adjust the supply situation, which had prevented his cavalry pursuing beyond Aziziya, while the Navy had been hampered by the tortuous course of the river; and in any case there was no use in his infantry trudging after the fleeing Turks with little or no chance of catching them. He continued:—

> "Although I had great hopes that these operations would, if carefully planned, ultimately eject the Turks from the positions they were hanging on to so grimly, the complete success which attended them exceeded my wildest hopes. It seems scarcely an exaggeration to say that the Turkish force as such has ceased to exist. I have

taken, since the commencement of operations, some 7,500 prisoners, of whom 4,500* have been taken between the 23rd and 27th February. In their flight the enemy have thrown away, buried or left behind, guns, mortars *minenwerfer*, machine guns,† rifles, ammunition, tents, equipment, food, etc., in profusion. We have taken four ships, including the *Firefly*, and a number of barges, *mahailas*, pontoons, launches and an immense quantity of bridging material."

The Turkish prisoners taken were thoroughly exhausted, he said, and the strain on them had evidently told. At a very moderate estimate he computed that his army had accounted for at least three-quarters of the Turkish forces which had opposed it. He trusted that he would receive orders to push on, as he had only the wreck of an army in front of him; and he ought to be in Baghdad before the Turks could get reinforcements. In view of the weakness of the Turkish divisions he was of opinion that his own four divisions would be able to deal with any eight or more divisions that the Turks could send towards Baghdad, and he considered it very doubtful if they could spare so many. Reliable information which he had obtained seemed to show that the Turks did not mean to defend Baghdad; and as soon as his supply situation was satisfactory he would begin creeping on so as to be ready to dash in when he got the mandate to do so from Government. His operations had affected favourably the Persian situation, and he would not be surprised if the Turkish force before Baratoff withdrew altogether.

His troops were very fit and well and he had been able so far to keep them well fed; while his wounded had been evacuated with the least possible discomfort. The news from the other fronts in Mesopotamia was good, and his troops at Nasiriya, eager to advance, might very likely be able to do so shortly. General Maude also said that he had issued a proclamation to all the Arabs, pointing out what had happened to the Turks, telling them that we wished to be friendly and hoping that they would come in and trade provisions for sale at fair rates. At the same time he had warned them that he would take stern reprisals if they interfered with our operations or became aggressive.

Muhammad Amin says that Halil came to XVIII Corps headquarters at Aziziya on the evening of the 27th February

* Subsequent reports showed this number to be nearer 4,000.
† We captured 39 guns, 22 trench mortars and 11 machine guns.

to discuss the situation. Halil had said the previous day that he had abandoned all hope of holding Baghdad and he had made no arrangements for doing so. But he would not agree to the Corps commander's plan to retire behind the Diyala river to reorganise and entrench there ; and insisted on the occupation of the Ctesiphon position. It was accordingly decided that the 51st Division and 18th Cavalry Regiment were to hold Lajj, while the 4th, 14th and 52nd* Divisions were to move to Ctesiphon. The force started to retire from Aziziya on the evening of the 27th and the movement continued throughout the night. But the men were so fatigued that there was great confusion during the night march and, in consequence, the Corps commander passed many anxious moments. As an instance of the confusion, Muhammad Amin says that the 52nd Division, though detailed as rear guard, actually passed to the head of the column during the march, arriving at Lajj at dawn on the 28th, followed by the other formations, who camped there in succession. All the Turkish infantry regiments had suffered heavy losses in the recent operations and their XVIII Corps was now reorganised by the reinforcement of the 14th, 51st and 52nd Divisions with the remnants of the 4th and 45th Divisions.†

During the next four days, i.e., till the 4th March, the British preparations for a further advance continued and the Naval flotilla, the Cavalry Division and the IIIrd Corps concentrated at Aziziya, while the Ist Corps closed up in the vicinity of the Nahr al Kalek bend. General Maude established his advanced headquarters at Aziziya,‡ having, as will be seen below, received orders to make a further advance. In this period touch was maintained with the enemy by the Royal Flying Corps, of which fourteen aeroplanes were at Aziziya, while reconnaissances by the armoured cars and cavalry confirmed the news that no enemy remained in the vicinity. More abandoned guns and other material were brought in and the armoured cars took a few prisoners near Zor.

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* The 45th Division appears to have been so reduced in strength as to be no longer a definite and separate formation.

† The 14th Division was composed of the 3rd, 64th, and 142nd Regiments, the 3rd and 142nd Regiments absorbing respectively the remnants of the 10th and 41st Regiments. The 51st Division still comprised the 7th, 9th, and 44th Regiments, and the 52nd Division the 37th, 40th, and 43rd Regiments, though the 40th Regiment absorbed the weak 149th Regiment, recently arrived. The 156th Regiment seems to have been under Corps command for a time, while the 141st and 167th Regiments disappeared, temporarily at any rate.

‡ Aziziya also became the advanced base.

On the 27th February the War Cabinet in London decided that it was desirable, as soon as the immediate operations in Mesopotamia were concluded, to determine our future policy and define our military commitments there; and they asked the Chief of the Imperial General Staff to submit his views at an early date. This he did next day. After reading out the latest telegraphic reports of the operations in Mesopotamia, which showed that the Turkish force on the Tigris was no longer in a position to offer a serious resistance,* the Chief of the Imperial General Staff asked what instructions he was to send General Maude in reply to the latter's telegram of the 24th February and he mentioned certain main factors as affecting the question of a further advance.

Very briefly stated, the gist of Sir William Robertson's remarks was as follows. General Maude's communications would probably not be adequate to maintain permanently a sufficient force at Baghdad before the 1st April, but he could doubtless continue to push further forward than at present; and he might be able to raid Baghdad, though the Chief of the Imperial General Staff could not say whether and when Baghdad itself—a difficult place to defend—could be occupied and safely and effectively held. The Turks might possibly be able to reinforce their force on the Tigris shortly with two more divisions, but even then their force would be inferior to ours in strength and its value would be much impaired by its recent defeat and hurried retreat. They might withdraw forces from Armenia, Kurdistan and Persia towards Baghdad, but this would improve the prospects of the projected Russian offensive, whose date of commencement, however, was doubtful owing to climatic reasons. It had also to be considered whether it would be possible to continue to find the necessary shipping to maintain our forces in Mesopotamia. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff understood the policy of H.M. Government to be that, subject to the security of the force and the capacity of the communications, they desired to establish British influence in the Baghdad *vilayet*.

The War Cabinet informed the Chief of the Imperial General Staff that he had correctly understood their policy and they directed him to convey instructions in that sense to General Maude on the understanding that, without departing therefrom, the latter was to exploit the recent operations to the fullest possible extent.

* The General Staff estimated that this force could now hardly exceed a strength of 5,000.

In accordance with these instructions the Chief of the Imperial General Staff telegraphed the same day (28th February) to General Maude and to the British *liaison* officer with the Russian Headquarters in the Caucasus. The telegram to General Maude ran as follows :—

" Your telegram of 24th instant received yesterday. It has been decided by the War Cabinet that their instructions of the 28th September last shall be modified as follows :—' Subject to the security of your force and to the capacity of your communications, it is the policy of H.M. Government to establish British influence in the Baghdad *vilayet*.'

" You are required by this decision to press enemy in direction of Baghdad and so exploit your recent success to full extent which you judge to be useful and feasible, having regard to your communications, to enemy reinforcements and to importance of your main body not being compelled later to fall back for any reason. Such a retirement, although it might not be a direct military disadvantage, might indirectly be so because of its objectionable political effect.

" From information in my possession I am given no grounds for supposing that Turks can assemble sufficient force to imperil your safety south of Baghdad before Grand Duke is ready to take the offensive, which should be in about four or five weeks' time. He is being pressed by me to begin as soon as possible, but date depends largely upon the disappearance of the snows, which are this year exceptionally heavy.

" The superiority of the Allies when the Grand Duke advances should be such as to make it safe for you to occupy and hold Baghdad, but it appears to me to be premature and possibly dangerous to attempt this until we see definitely what the Russians can do.

" There would be every advantage in your cavalry raiding Baghdad if that becomes feasible, in order to destroy the important depots which the enemy has there. The capacity of your communications must be the chief factor in the situation at the present time. Further, I understand that Baghdad can be rendered untenable during the flood season and that its effective possession would meanwhile necessitate making extended dispositions beyond the town.

" You say, in your telegram of 6th February, that you do not expect to be able to maintain three divisions and a

cavalry division at Baghdad before 1st April, and I doubt if you should enter Baghdad with your main body until you can maintain four divisions and a cavalry division.

"Question of withdrawing 13th Division from you will for the present be in abeyance in the altered circumstances and fresh troops coming from India will provide for your lengthened communications.

"Inform me if the War Cabinet decision and the foregoing instructions do not explain your mission sufficiently. Further, I hope you will continue to give me your views as the subsequent development of the situation may require, as it is difficult for me correctly to appreciate local circumstances. . . . ."

The telegram to the *liaison* officer with Russian Caucasus headquarters was as follows :—

"Following for Grand Duke from me.

"General Maude has received instructions to continue to press enemy in direction of Baghdad and accordingly is advancing with four divisions and a cavalry division on that place. How far and how fast he is able to advance necessarily depends on the resistance he meets with and on the capacity of his communications. At the same time my information is that enemy now opposing Maude is in no great strength and is in considerable disorder. While realising to what extent you are hampered by the snows, I trust you will make every effort to take advantage of the situation by as early an offensive as possible, particularly in direction of Mosul, as any success there would have great effect."

The telegram to General Maude was repeated to the Commander-in-Chief in India, who had, however, telegraphed on the 1st March, before its receipt, to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff.* To General Monro it appeared that by pausing to reorganise his communications General Maude was missing an opportunity for completing the shattering of the Turkish forces by an unrelenting pursuit and was giving them time to re-form for the defence of Baghdad. Although General Maude could judge best how far ahead of his organised communications he could operate, the prospect of a decisive gain seemed to justify privations ; and the considerable enemy forces said to be still remaining on the Hamadan front would be placed in a precarious situation by an early British advance on Baghdad.

* His telegram was approved before despatch by a special meeting of the Governor-General's Executive Council.

In regard to the further instructions asked for by General Maude, as India had a direct concern in the strategical results of the operations and in the maintenance of his force, the problems confronting him had been the subject of close study and discussion in India ; and General Monro gave very briefly the conclusions that had been arrived at. Baghdad afforded the Turks a concentration point, a supply area and a base from which to menace the Basra *vilayet* and Persia ; whereas, if we captured it, they had no other suitable base nearer than Mosul or Jerablus and would therefore suffer all the disadvantages we had ourselves experienced through absence of good supply areas and bases ; and from a political standpoint, our occupation of Baghdad, if carried out speedily and maintained, would so increase our prestige in the East as to reduce greatly the anxiety regarding the situation in Persia and Afghanistan. If these last anticipations were fulfilled it might be possible, on a reconsideration of her military position, for India to release further troops for employment elsewhere.*

General Maude's estimate, of the 6th February, of his communications' capacity seemed a conservative one, but it was believed in India that they would be capable of more than therein stated. On this point, however, General Maude's views could be invited.

Baghdad formed a tangible objective close at hand and within our grasp, and, although their outlook in India was necessarily limited, it seemed to them better worth the effort than a stroke through the long and physically difficult Syrian theatre.† General Monro accordingly submitted for consideration whether the troops, railway material and resources then being sent to Egypt from India would not be better employed in the improvement of our position at the convergence of the Tigris and Euphrates near Baghdad, with a view to allowing of direct and effective co-operation with the Russians in the course of the ensuing summer and autumn.

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* This portion of the telegram had been modified by the Viceroy's Council. General Monro was prepared to go further than this, but the Council, looking to the safety of India, considered it necessary, before promising to weaken the forces on their North-West Frontier, to await the effect in Afghanistan and on the Mahomedans in India of the capture of the sacred Moslem city of Baghdad.

† At the beginning of January 1917 we completed the railway to El Arish and cleared the Sinai province of Egypt of Turkish troops. To oppose our apparent intention to advance, the Turks were estimated to have concentrated by the end of February in Palestine six divisions ; but they were believed to be meeting with great difficulties in this concentration, both in Syria and Palestine, owing to famine and the hostility of the local inhabitants.

The Chief ot the Imperial General Staff, replying to the Commander-in-Chief in India on the 2nd March, referred to the instructions sent to General Maude two days previously as showing that he and General Monro were in general agreement; and, pointing out how the movement of the 13th Division to Egypt had been postponed, he said that he would keep in mind the question of further co-operation with the Russians, though it was as yet too early to form any definite plans. He hoped that General Monro agreed that the instructions to General Maude laid down a policy sufficiently wide to meet existing circumstances.

General Maude did not receive the Chief of the Imperial General Staff's telegram of the 28th February till the evening of the 2nd March and he replied to it next day. His communications would already, he said, maintain a cavalry division and four divisions at Baghdad; and he would have a reserve of four days' supplies at Aziziya for his whole force by the 5th March. He anticipated getting such considerable supplies, especially fuel and fodder, at Baghdad that the supply situation could be viewed with equanimity. It was important to occupy Baghdad as early as possible. The Turks in front of him were no longer a fighting force owing to their casualties, losses and demoralisation, and consequently we should be able to occupy Baghdad virtually without opposition; whereas if the enemy remained or regained possession we might have severe fighting before establishing ourselves there; and the Arabs would misinterpret hesitation on our part.

The occupation of Baghdad would have three considerable advantages for us: it would enable us to organise local sources of supply on both the Tigris and Euphrates; we should gain control of the Euphrates below Baghdad; and by a firm attitude we should preserve order along our communications. Allowing for the complication due to delay in the Russian offensive, it was doubtful if the Turks could detach sufficient forces from their Caucasus front in time to be effective against his own force, which was numerically equal to seven or eight Turkish divisions and which, acting on a defensive-offensive, might successfully deal with more. Though he did not know the Russian intentions he presumed that they meant to assume the offensive vigorously, so that the Turks had only about two weeks to concentrate a new army and score a decisive success on the Tigris before strong pressure was brought to bear by the Russians in another quarter. Bearing this in mind, as well as the recent rout of the enemy, the existing fine

weather and the approaching flood season, General Maude proposed, provided his supply situation was quite satisfactory, to move from Aziziya on the 5th or 6th March and to cover the distance to Baghdad in four or five marches.

General Maude did not intend to enter Baghdad except with an advanced guard, until satisfied by enquiries on the spot that he could deal with the flood problem satisfactorily; but it seemed clear that he would be able to do so. If the Chief of the Imperial General Staff did not approve of his suggestion to occupy Baghdad forthwith, there was still time for further instructions to reach General Maude.

This telegram, it should be noted, crossed one from the Chief of the Imperial General Staff also sent on the 3rd March, which said that telegrams from General Maude, received in London after the 28th February, showed the Turkish defeat to be more complete than had been at first apparent. "Consequently" continued the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, "the feasibility of occupying Baghdad forthwith is probably greater than I then concluded. I hope, therefore, you understand that, subject to due regard being paid to security and communications and to the other points mentioned therein, my telegram of 28th left matters to your own judgment. In brief, our object should be to attain greatest possible result from your recent victory and at the same time to avoid overdoing things to such an extent as to incur repetition of the old communication trouble, or, after a definite occupation of Baghdad, to be compelled to withdraw."

On the 4th March, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff agreed to General Maude's proposals of the 3rd and said that he understood the Russians meant to launch a serious offensive; and he followed this up with a second telegram the same day, saying that the Russian Grand Duke had given orders to both Baratoff and Chernozuboff to commence operations to the greatest extent possible so as to co-operate in further successes with General Maude. Baratoff's reinforcement was still incomplete, but he was to advance from Bijar and via Hamadan, which he had captured on the 2nd. Chernozuboff was not quite ready, but was to advance by a route of which detailed information would be sent to General Maude as soon as possible.

On the 4th March also, the Commander-in-Chief in India telegraphed to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff that he was in complete agreement with the views expressed in General Maude's telegram of the 3rd.

Telegraphing on the 3rd, General Maude said that it was still impossible to give anything like an accurate list of captured guns, arms and other material, as it was strewn over eighty miles of country, much of it had been buried and much thrown into the river. It is believed that out of their total of 91 guns, the Turks only managed to get 28 safely away; we captured 39 and the remainder were said to have been thrown into the river.

The decision, announced in the telegrams from the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, to postpone the withdrawal of the 13th Division from Mesopotamia is noteworthy. It meant an increase to the force there by practically another division; as the first of the thirteen fresh Indian battalions* coming from India reached Basra on the 4th March. With regard to the chances of getting further troops from India, although the progress made in raising new battalions, under General Monro's direction, had been good, at the end of February he had to inform the Chief of the Imperial General Staff that it was impossible to raise units there as quickly as in Great Britain. The machinery for it was not available and it took time He hoped, therefore, that Sir William Robertson would give him ample notice and an indication of what he considered should be furnished. General Monro said that India was aware of her responsibilities and desired to accept them in full; and he was convinced that the more the Chief of the Imperial General Staff took the authorities in India into his confidence the more prompt and certain would be their response.

While at Aziziya, General Maude learnt little that was definite of Turkish reinforcements; it seemed clear that the Turkish force on the Persian front was withdrawing and that another infantry regiment had recently joined the XVIII Turkish Corps, while two more regiments had reached Baghdad; and there were reports that the Turkish Sixth Army commander, Halil, had resigned owing to the non-arrival of promised reinforcements, that Ibn Rashid, one of the rival Amirs of Central Arabia, had told the Turks that he could give them no more assistance and that the Turkish garrison had withdrawn from Hail (in Nejd).

In a letter to General Whigham written a few days after leaving Aziziya, in speaking of the operations up to the

*They were :– Guides Infantry, 24th, 84th and 87th Punjabis, 42nd, 95th, 99th and 113th Infantry, 116th Mahrattas, 1/5th and 1/6th Gurkhas, 2/39th Garhwalis and 32nd Sikh Pioneers.

4th March, General Maude said that the conduct of his troops had been magnificent and the number of regiments which had specially distinguished themselves had been very large. The men were at the top of their form and, although tired from the trying marches after so much trench life, were very well and most cheery, in spite of the constant gales and dust storms.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE OCCUPATION OF BAGHDAD.

(MAPS 24 AND 25.)

DURING the halt at Aziziya nothing transpired to alter General Maude's previous conclusion, based both on reliable information and on the heavy losses which the enemy had suffered, that the Turks did not mean to defend Baghdad. In his order for the recommencement, on the 5th March, of the advance, the information given concerning the enemy was that small bodies of Turks with guns were reported to be in the vicinity of Ctesiphon and along the Diyala river. The Naval Flotilla and Cavalry Division were to move to Lajj; the IIIrd Corps, with a detachment of No. 2 Bridging Train, to Zor; and the leading division of the Ist Corps to Aziziya. The rear division of the Ist Corps was to concentrate two of its brigades and a proportion of divisional troops at a point nineteen miles south-east of Aziziya, and to piquet with the remainder* the route between there and Shumran.

In the belief that there was no hostile force of any strength south of the Diyala river, the Cavalry Division, led by the 7th Cavalry Brigade and preceded by armoured cars (13th Light Armoured Motor Battery) left Aziziya at 4.30 a.m., on the 5th March. After an hour's halt at Zor to water and feed, the advance was resumed about 10 a.m.; and soon afterwards reports from aeroplanes and armoured cars indicated a small enemy force in the vicinity of Lajj, where part of it was digging. There was, however, a strong southerly gale, which raised clouds of dust and made all observation very difficult.

About 10.30 a.m., when some three miles north-west of Zor, the advanced guard (13th Lancers), coming under shell fire, extended its left to the Tigris and continued the advance dismounted, supported by the 13th Hussars, two of whose squadrons advanced dismounted on the right of the 13th Lancers. Soon afterwards, discerning what appeared to be an enemy convoy about a mile or more to the northward, Colonel Richardson, commanding 13th Hussars, decided to

* Less two infantry battalions and a squadron Corps Cavalry, attached temporarily to the Tigris Defences.

attack it mounted. Recalling his two dismounted squadrons, he moved off at a trot, three squadrons in echelon from the right moving direct on their objective, with the fourth squadron detached to the right to work round it and cover the flank. Encountering some gun and rifle fire, the three squadrons increased their pace and drew swords, when suddenly they saw through the dust a line of Turkish infantry about a hundred yards in front, some running away, some in an attitude of surrender, and others firing heavily from their trench. Having no reason to suppose that he had anything but a weak enemy force to deal with, Colonel Richardson gave the signal to extend and charge; and the Hussars swept over the Turkish infantry, killing and capturing about fifty of them. But only to come under an intense rifle and machine gun fire from a second line of trenches, which was a few hundred yards ahead and which the dust had hitherto obscured.

The squadrons began to lose heavily, and Colonel Richardson, seeing that it was hopeless to continue the advance, gave the signal to wheel, maintaining their pace, to the right and then to the right again, so as to withdraw.* This movement was carried out admirably in spite of the heavy fire; and after a short withdrawal the three squadrons dismounted and again advanced.† But their attacking line did not now exceed a total of sixty of all ranks and they were unable to advance beyond the shallow trench they had charged over. Behind them, the 7th Cavalry Brigade had been unable to see through the dust what had happened, and Colonel Richardson went back to acquaint the Brigadier with the situation.

Well to the left of the Hussars, the 13th Lancers continued their dismounted advance till checked by well-entrenched infantry supported by artillery. The enemy force in position at Lajj, originally estimated as about a battalion, was subsequently ascertained to consist of the 51st Turkish Division, i.e., about 2,500 infantry and 16 guns; and it had entrenched a position near Lajj, extending eastward from the Tigris for some two and a half miles to about the point which the Hussars had charged, whence the trenches bent backwards for some distance.

The 7th Cavalry Brigade reinforced the dismounted line with the 14th Lancers, and "S" Battery, R.H.A., came into

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* A few individual Hussars who reached the enemy second line were killed or wounded and captured.

† The fourth squadron had taken up a position dismounted some little distance to the right front.

action in support; while a little later, the 6th Cavalry Brigade, moving round to try to turn the enemy's left flank, found that it extended too far and was too strong. Moreover, the brigade found it necessary to come into action to relieve the critical situation of the somewhat isolated 13th Hussars, whose numbers had been still further reduced and who were threatened with a counter-attack.

Towards evening the wind dropped, visibility became clearer, and the Turkish guns increased their activity. It was then seen that the 7th Cavalry Brigade was very close to the enemy's trenches, and its horses had to be sent back hurriedly to get out of effective range. "V" Battery, R.H.A., coming under fire from three directions, and one of its guns being disabled by a direct hit, sustained so many casualties that it was temporarily silenced. The enemy position was clearly too strong for the cavalry to capture, and after dark the division broke off the action and withdrew, to bivouac on the Tigris bank about two and a half miles westward of Zor. Thirty-three Turkish prisoners had been captured and the British had sustained about 130 casualties, including 9 officers and 77 other ranks in the 13th Hussars.* Their brilliant charge evoked the admiration of friend and foe alike and, as their Regimental History† says, "The 5th March will always be one of the regiment's great days, for the level sands by the Tigris saw that morning in the dust storm a death ride just as brave and devoted as the one which has become immortal," i.e., the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava.

By nightfall the IIIrd Corps, after a long march carried out in great discomfort owing to the blinding dust, reached Zor‡; and the 7th Division of the Ist Corps reached Aziziya. Though the enemy was still holding his position at Lajj, there were indications that he intended to retire.

At 10 p.m., General Maude, whose advanced headquarters in the river steamer *P 53* had also reached Zor, issued orders for aeroplanes and cavalry patrols to ascertain early next morning if the enemy still held Lajj. If so, the IIIrd Corps was to capture the position, while the Cavalry Division moved round the northern flank to deal with the retreating enemy.

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* Three officers killed, including Captain Eve of the leading squadron, who fell sword in hand among the Turkish infantry; one officer wounded and taken prisoner, and five officers wounded; twenty-five other ranks killed, three wounded and taken prisoner, and forty-nine wounded.

† "The Thirteenth Hussars in the Great War," by Sir H. Mortimer Durand.

‡ The *nala* crossings and irrigation cuts near Zor were particularly bad and delayed the transport considerably.

If the enemy had retired, the Cavalry Division was to push on and reconnoitre towards Ctesiphon, operating against the enemy's left flank and rear wherever found; the gunboats would move up towards Ctesiphon and co-operate; the IIIrd Corps was to march to Bustan, the 7th Division to Zor and the bulk of the 3rd Division to Aziziya; while Advanced General Headquarters would move to Lajj.

According to the Turkish account,* their 51st Division began its retirement at sunset, and in compliance with orders moved back to the Diyala, apparently in company with the greater part of the XVIII Corps from Ctesiphon. In spite of previous preparations, including the marking of their route, the Turkish troops encountered considerable difficulties in this night march, owing to the impenetrable darkness, the rain, the numerous canals to be traversed, the mud and the marshes near the Diyala. XVIII Corps headquarters crossed the Diyala at midnight by the "artillery bridge" (located in a large loop of the river about three miles above its junction with the Tigris); and by the morning its troops were taking up positions along the Diyala right bank.

British cavalry patrols, moving out early on the 6th March, found the Lajj position empty; and the Cavalry Division, advancing and finding the Ctesiphon position also unoccupied, pushed on to within three miles of the Diyala. But, although it captured a few stragglers, it met no formed body of the enemy. The wind rose again, and the intensity of the driving sand made observation very difficult indeed. But from the aeroplane and other reports received, General Maude came to the conclusion that the Turks did not intend to make a serious stand on the Diyala; and in his orders that evening it was stated that hostile troops were still on the line of the Diyala, but that their general movement appeared to be towards Baghdad. The British advance was to continue next day. The Cavalry Division was to advance from Bawi to the line of the Diyala and to report early any hostile movements observed; the IIIrd Corps was to secure a crossing over the Diyala; and the Ist Corps was to close up towards the front with its head at Bustan.

To make the situation clearer, it is necessary now to turn to the Turkish plans and dispositions. The account of these and the comments on them given in this chapter have been

* "Baghdad and the Story of its Last Fall."

taken from "Baghdad and the Story of its Last Fall," by Muhammad Amin, who was at the time on Halil Pasha's staff.

Halil, the Turkish Sixth Army commander, was opposed to all idea of, or any preparation for, a retirement, until the British actually crossed the Tigris at Shumran; and had made no plan or preparations for it or for the defence of Baghdad. In 1915, his predecessor, Nur-ud-Din, had made arrangements for the preparation of five lines of defence astride the Tigris, at and above Ctesiphon. The first two of these had been attacked by General Townshend in November, 1915; the third was between Qusaiba and the Diyala; the fourth lay along the Diyala right bank continuing across the Tigris to near Shawa Khan; and the fifth extended from the north of the Tel Muhammad mounds on the Tigris left bank to near Lake Aqarquf on the right bank. These lines of entrenchments, only partially constructed in 1915 and neglected since then, were in a very dilapidated and imperfect state in February, 1917.

During the flood season from March to May it was a simple matter, by means of inundations, to bar the advance on Baghdad of a hostile army advancing up the Tigris. The country on the left bank of the Diyala could be flooded and the marshes there extended, so as to render both a direct attack and a turning movement to the northward almost impossible; and by cutting the Tigris and Euphrates embankments above Baghdad the city could be surrounded by flood water. But for such inundations previous preparation was necessary and complete success would be assured only after the rivers reached their high flood level. They had not done so when General Maude commenced his final advance and Halil had done little, if anything, towards flooding the areas concerned.

It was not until his own arrival there on the 26th February, 1917, that Halil considered seriously how he was to defend Baghdad; and his first conclusion was that he could not do so.* Subsequently he showed great indecision, and such arrangements as he made to defend it were confused, insufficient and lacking in co-ordination. For some days he dreamt of another victory at Ctesiphon, and, in spite of the remonstrances of his XVIII Corps commander, he wasted six days in work on the position there, which he subsequently agreed he could not hold, instead of utilising all his available men and material

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* As already mentioned General Maude received information that this was the case.

for the construction and improvement of the more important defences in rear.

Enver Pasha, ignorant of the local conditions, but impressed with the political and military value of the city, ordered Halil to defend Baghdad stubbornly, and, in order to effect a junction with the XIII Corps from Persia, not to evacuate the area east of the Tigris. Inundating the front of the city, if possible, he was to take up a position between the Tigris and Euphrates to cover his right flank, while the XIII Corps was to hold a position on the left flank. In point of fact, however, the time available admitted neither of the inundations being made nor of the advent of the XIII Corps, while the XVIII Corps was not strong enough to hold the extensive front indicated. The total effective strength of the XVIII Corps was reduced to about 500 sabres, 10,000 rifles and 50 guns, and it was operating in a practically alien country, where it could obtain neither men, material, nor munitions. It was, therefore, important to shorten as far as possible the defensive line it would have to hold.

Owing possibly to these instructions, Halil, ignoring the fact that the XIII Corps could not join him for some little time, and that he could not supply both Corps by the Tigris and Euphrates lines of communication, decided that it must be his main object to effect a junction with the XIII Corps before retiring together. For this purpose he considered it necessary to concentrate the bulk of the XVIII Corps east of the Tigris and to defend the Diyala line so as to safeguard his communications with the XIII Corps. On the other hand, several of his staff and the XVIII Corps commander considered that the XVIII Corps should defend Baghdad as long as possible and should then retire so as to preserve its strength for further operations, while the XIII Corps, if pressed, should retire on Kirkuk and Altun Köpri destroying all supplies in the area as it retired. These officers considered that, although the Diyala line was certainly the natural line of defence against attack up the Tigris, it was necessary to hold a position on the Tigris right bank also, where the waterless level country offered facilities for defence, to prevent General Maude turning the Diyala line and cutting the Turkish communications.

Work was not commenced on the Diyala defences until the 1st March; but by the 6th, under the direction of an officer of the Army Headquarters staff, a line of fire trenches along the right bank for about eight miles north of the Tigris

had been completed, as well as several communication and reserve trenches.* The whole front, however, was so covered with huts, embankments, gardens and mounds that the field of gun fire was much restricted and consequently many of the 32 guns destined for the position were not emplaced. So great did the shortcomings of the position appear to the XVIII Corps commander on the morning of the 6th March that he then decided to hold it as an advanced position only and to construct his main position on the Qarara–Tel Muhammad line, some two and a half to four miles in rear.

Muhammad Amin himself was detailed to superintend the construction of a defensive line on the Tigris right bank, where work commenced on the 2nd March. Impressed by the short time available and the necessity for not taking up a line too long for the force to hold, he selected the 1915 line along the Umm at Tubul sandhills, which extended from opposite the north-west corner of the Karada peninsula on the Tigris to near the point where the Mahsudiya canal joins Lake Aqarquf; and he began to prepare there the stretch of three miles lying between the Tigris and the Decauville railway, which ran to the Euphrates. Next day, however, a German major, sent by Army Headquarters to select the defensive line, considered that the line being prepared was too near Baghdad railway station, and chose another line two or three miles to the south. But Muhammad Amin considered that this line, about six miles long, was too extended, and—owing to the flat and open ground in rear rendering reinforcement, manoeuvre and retirement very difficult—unsuitable. No agreement could be reached, but finally in the evening Muhammad Amin was over-ruled by Army Headquarters. On the 4th March work on this new position was commenced, and about four miles of the front between Tel Aswad† and the Tigris had been partly entrenched by the 7th, when the XVIII Corps and 52nd Division commanders came to inspect it. They at once condemned the position as being too long and gave Muhammad Amin orders to entrench instead the Umm at Tubul line. Here, assisted by part of the 52nd Division, he had completed by the evening of the 8th some three or four miles of fire trench in front of, and communication trenches back to, the 1915 defences.

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* Apparently the 1/22nd Regiment, just arrived from Ruwandiz, and two battalions 156th Regiment with other details carried out this work.

† The point called Tel Aswad by Muhammad Amin was apparently some one and a half miles north of the place shown by that name on our maps.

On the morning of the 6th March the XVIII Corps was disposed as follows. Holding the Diyala right bank, from the Tigris to a little north of the artillery bridge, were the three battalions of the 44th Regiment; the remainder of the 51st Division (six battalions 7th and 9th Regiments) being concentrated in rear to the northward of Qarara. The number of guns in this part of the line is uncertain, but it included two 15-cm. and two 10·5 cm. howitzers. Carrying on the line northward along the Diyala to a ford about eight and a half miles from the Tigris, were the three battalions 3rd Regiment (14th Division) with two field batteries; and on their left, about five miles to the north, the 3/64th Regiment with a mountain battery held a position opposite the point where the old Nahrwan canal almost joined the Diyala. The remainder of the 14th Division (1/22nd and three battalions 142nd Regiments) was concentrated about three miles in rear of the centre of the 3rd Regiment. Of the 52nd Division, the three battalions 43rd Regiment, with at least a section of 10·5 cm. howitzers, were on their way to the Tigris right bank; two battalions 40th Regiment* were with the Corps Reserve east of Karada; and two battalions 37th Regiment, *en route* to rejoin the Division from Persia, were moving to Baghdad from Baquba. The two battalions 156th Regiment were also with the Corps Reserve east of Karada. Eastward of the Diyala the 18th and 33rd Cavalry Regiments, supported by an infantry detachment at the artillery bridgehead, were in observation, but were withdrawn to the right bank during the day when the bridge was dismantled. The 33rd Cavalry was then sent to watch the Diyala line on the left of the 3/64th Regiment and the 18th Cavalry went to the Tigris right bank.

Having started his available men to work on the Tel Muhammad position, the XVIII Corps commander got permission to send the whole of the 52nd Division to the Tigris right bank; and he ordered the 15 cm. and 10·5 cm. howitzers with the 44th Regiment to move back from the Diyala to Qarara.† Although they were close to Baghdad, the Turkish supply arrangements had broken down and their men were very short of food; and this added to the demoralisation caused by their recent heavy losses.

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* The third battalion of this regiment seems to have temporarily disappeared.

† For some unexplained reason only the 10·5 cm. howitzers carried out this order.

During the night of the 6th/7th an attempt to tow the boats of the "artillery bridge" to Baghdad resulted in all of them breaking loose; and in the morning all but three were found broken or full of water, when, in accordance with orders to destroy all means of crossing, they were all dragged over to the right bank. Muhammad Amin says that some of them remained on the left bank and were used by us in crossing; and he blames the 44th Regiment for their negligence in the matter, as he considers that the use of these boats accelerated our passage of the river. But he is mistaken. We used our own pontoons for the crossing and found no Turkish boats at all on the left bank.

Early on the 7th March the British continued their advance, and at 8.50 a.m., General Maude sent General Marshall a summary of the information received from aeroplanes, cavalry and gunboats. The two bridges* across the Diyala had been removed; only a small number of enemy troops, and little movement, had been seen along the river; and a few enemy guns near the Diyala–Tigris junction had been in action. It appeared to General Maude that the enemy was trying to delay our advance with a small rear guard; and General Marshall was instructed to push his artillery forward into action, as even if he could not throw a bridge over the river in daylight he might be able to do so after dark.

The IIIrd Corps advanced guard (Corps Cavalry, a field artillery brigade and 38th Infantry Brigade) under General O'Dowda (38th Brigade) reached at 9 a.m. a point about four and a half miles south-east of Diyala village, where it halted and sent forward the Corps Cavalry to reconnoitre, supported by two field batteries and accompanied by an officer of the Corps General Staff and the commander of No. 2 Bridging Train detachment. At first it was found difficult to estimate the enemy's numbers and it was thought that he was not in force; but at 2.35 p.m., General Marshall, after personal reconnaissance, reported to General Maude that the Turks seemed to be in some strength along the lower reaches and had at least seven guns there, while our Cavalry Division guns had been heard in action further northward. Close reconnaissance of the river line would, however, be impossible till nightfall. Ten minutes later, General Marshall sent General Maude a further message saying that his advanced guard, with the bridging detachment, was moving up to a point three miles

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* i.e., one at Diyala village and the "artillery bridge."

south-east of Diyala village; that all the 13th Division artillery and the 2/104th Battery, R.G.A. (60-pounders) were going into action against the hostile artillery; that an infantry brigade, a field battery and a sapper company of the 14th Division were going to cross the Tigris and move up its right bank to turn the Diyala line*; and that the remainder of the IIIrd Corps would bivouac about five and a half miles south-east of Diyala village.

An enemy aeroplane was seen during the morning and the Turkish account shows that from its report, which was fairly accurate, their XVIII Corps commander drew the conclusion that we intended to bridge the Tigris near Bawi; while, from the movements of our cavalry, he formed the opinion that we intended to try to force a passage at the "artillery bridge" site. In point of fact, our Cavalry Division, which reconnoitred the river line for some fourteen miles north of the Tigris, was only trying to ascertain the Turkish dispositions; and reported that the enemy was holding this line, practically throughout its length, with some guns and a considerable number of machine guns. During the afternoon the artillery with the 13th Division and the naval guns engaged the Turkish artillery along the lower reaches of the Diyala.†

At 5.50 p.m., General Marshall informed General Maude that a crossing at Diyala village would be attempted after sunset (6 p.m.) by the 38th Infantry Brigade, supported by artillery, and that the 35th Brigade (14th Division) had begun to cross the Tigris. At 6.15 p.m., General Maude issued an operation order, stating that the enemy had disclosed little strength along the Diyala, no more than seven guns‡ having been reported; that our patrols had pushed up close to the river without drawing heavy rifle fire; and that our aeroplanes had reported withdrawals towards Baghdad. Operations by the IIIrd Corps for the passage of the Diyala would proceed; and the Ist Corps, less battalions attached temporarily to the Tigris Defences, would close up with its head at Bawi. Separate orders were issued to the Cavalry Division to be ready to move at 6 a.m. next day, its destination being dependent on the progress made in crossing the Diyala.

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* The Corps commander had decided two days earlier to send a portion of the 14th Division across the Tigris and the necessary orders had been issued before the corps advanced on the 7th March.

† The Turkish two 15 cm. howitzers, which fired 64 of the 88 shells they had, blew up two of our ammunition limbers by a direct hit.

‡ The Turkish account says that three of their guns broke down entirely after firing only three or four rounds.

To hamper the evacuation northward of Turkish material, two aeroplanes, carrying two R.E. officers with dynamite, had been sent on the morning of the 7th March to destroy a railway bridge forty miles north of Baghdad. On landing they were attacked by Arabs, and finding that the dynamite charges carried were too small to destroy the bridge, which was of reinforced concrete, the attempt was abandoned.

The detachment sent across the Tigris under General Thomson, consisting of the 2nd Battery, R.F.A., 12th Company Sappers and Miners and 35th Infantry Brigade, with orders to move up the right bank and support the passage of the Diyala, began to cross near Bawi in the river steamer *P 51* at 3.15 p.m. The crossing took some time and it was not till after midnight that the infantry battalions and sapper company with a section of the field battery and a section of the machine gun company completed disembarkation on the right bank, most of the first line transport being still on the left bank. Some hours earlier a battalion had been sent forward about two miles to ramp a large canal, which appeared from the map to be the first main obstacle to be passed; and General Thomson decided to advance, without waiting for the rest of his guns and animals, with a guide obtained from a local Shaikh, who said that there were no Turks on the right bank. The column started to move forward at 1.30 a.m., on the 8th March. Its route lay through cultivation and over many water cuts and large deep canals which caused considerable delay. At daybreak,* it passed a point on the Tigris bank about four miles south-west of Diyala village, whence it could see our troops on the Diyala left bank but was unable to get into signalling communication with 14th Division headquarters.

The attempt to cross the Diyala had failed. General O'Dowda, in charge of the operation, had at his disposal all the 13th Division artillery and 2/104th Battery, 38th Infantry Brigade, 8th Welch Pioneers, 71st and 72nd Companies R.E., and a detachment No. 2 Bridging Train; and at dusk this force concentrated south-eastward of Diyala village. The bridging detachment commander then carried out a personal reconnaissance of the river, from the village for about one hundred and fifty yards upstream. He estimated the river to be about one hundred and twenty yards wide with a slow current and very steep twenty-foot banks; and in the limited

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* Sunrise was about 6.20 a.m.

time available came to the conclusion that the only place where pontoons could be launched was down one of the bridge ramps at the village.*

It was arranged that the 6th King's Own with the 71st Company, R.E., were to occupy the left bank portion of the village and ferry men across in four pontoons to form a covering party to the bridge construction; being supported on their right and left by the 6th East Lancashire and 6th Loyal North Lancashire respectively, with the 6th South Lancashire in reserve. The King's Own, encountering hostile fire from the opposite bank, occupied the village at 11 p.m., and the pontoons were then moved forward. It was bright moonlight, the pontoons had to be man-handled for a considerable distance, and it took a little time to get the first pontoon up to the launching position; and as soon as an attempt was made to put it in the water, so many men were hit that the proceedings were checked. For the next attempt all four pontoons were first gradually got forward, ready with their crews and passengers to launch quickly, and an artillery barrage was put down. But the first three pontoons had scarcely left the bank when all the men in them were hit and the pontoons themselves were swept down by the current into the Tigris.† Sixty-four casualties had been incurred and all the officers and men engaged had behaved with the utmost coolness and gallantry. But it was clear that further reconnaissance and preparation were essential to effect a successful crossing; and further attempts were for the time being abandoned.

In the meantime No. 1 Bridging Train from downstream had reached Bawi and at 5.30 a.m. on the 8th March received orders to construct a boat bridge across the Tigris. The construction of this about half a mile below Bawi was commenced at 7.30 a.m.; and it was ready for traffic about 2 p.m. A Turkish aerial reconnaissance, carried out about 7.30 a.m., observed the bridge construction and reported a cavalry and infantry division in the vicinity, apparently intending to cross the bridge, which they estimated would be completed about 9 a.m.

There had been several explosions in Baghdad the previous day (7th), fires there had been seen that day (8th), and General Maude, still apparently in the belief that the Turks

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* There were also spill banks, seven to nine feet high, to the river, which gave good cover to both sides, but which rendered the launching of pontoons very difficult.

† The fourth pontoon was not launched.

did not intend to make a stand, issued orders, just before 10 a.m. on the 8th, that the Cavalry Division was to cross the Bawi bridge as soon as it was ready and proceed direct to Baghdad; and he warned the Ist Corps to hold its leading division ready to follow the cavalry, any time after 6 p.m., in a night march towards Baghdad.

During the 8th March the IIIrd Corps made arrangements to cross the Diyala after dark. Artillery bombardments were carried out intermittently; and a column, under Brig.-General Gunning, consisting of the Corps Cavalry, a field battery, a sapper company with two pontoons and an infantry brigade, was sent northward for about seven miles to try to cross the river. Finding enemy in position here, General Gunning tried still farther to the north, but the enemy were found there also; and continuing to send patrols out to search for a crossing place, his force bivouacked for the night with orders not to commit itself but to report the situation at daybreak. The 38th Infantry Brigade, meanwhile, made detailed arrangements to cross about five hundred yards above Diyala village.

During the morning of the 8th, General Thomson's column on the Tigris right bank continued its advance on Shaikh Aswad, in which vicinity some enemy had been reported the previous day by an aeroplane. Owing to this the troops moved in open formation with due precautions and consequently progress through this difficult intersected area was slow, Shaikh Aswad not being reached till noon. No Turks were encountered, though a number of mounted Arabs were seen; General Thomson's artillery could at first discern no targets on the Tigris left bank, though they did so not long afterwards; information from the Arabs was conflicting, some saying that there were no Turks on the right bank and others that 2,000 were entrenched westward of Baghdad; and communication by visual signalling with the main force on the Tigris left bank could not be established. The pack wireless station was erected and, orders being received to halt, the force went into bivouac in the palm groves near Shaikh Aswad.

At 11.15 a.m., General Maude issued orders that the IIIrd Corps was to continue operations to force the passage of the Diyala; the Cavalry Division, crossing the Bawi bridge, was to reach Baghdad by daybreak next day; the leading division of the Ist Corps was to follow the cavalry and push up a brigade group to support them closely; and General Thomson's detachment was to stand fast. Advanced General Headquarters would remain at Bawi.

The Cavalry Division, whose men and horses had had a very long and tiring day on the 7th, and whose men had been unloading ration barges and drawing rations for most of the morning, started to cross the bridge about 2 p.m. on the 8th; but, as the full number of bridge anchors were not yet secured, they were somewhat delayed and did not all reach the right bank till nearly 6 p.m. The leading brigade of the 7th Division began crossing about 7.30 p.m.

A Turkish air reconnaissance, carried out about 2.30 p.m., gave the enemy commander information of the cavalry crossing and of the presence of the 7th Division near the bridge. This aeroplane also observed and reported fairly accurately the composition and movement of General Gunning's column; but it saw no other changes in the British dispositions. In the early afternoon the Turkish cavalry on the Tigris right bank reported the presence near Shaikh Aswad of General Thomson's column; and this, combined with the aeroplane report, led their XVIII Corps commander to the conclusion that General Maude meant to make his main effort up the Tigris right bank, though he would probably at the same time exercise pressure against the Diyala line. During the afternoon and evening the Corps commander made his dispositions accordingly. The 52nd Division, joined by the 37th Regiment (which had reached Baghdad) and reinforced by the 2/64th Regiment (expected that night from Falluja) and the machine gun company of the 156th Regiment,* was to hold the line of Umm at Tubul sandhills, being covered, during the completion of its defences, by a cavalry regiment, a field battery and an infantry regiment on the Tel Aswad line. The 51st Division was to hold two artillery batteries and the 7th and 9th Regiments ready to cross to the Tigris right bank, if necessary, to prevent the enemy crossing the Tigris above the Diyala. The 14th Division and 44th Regiment would continue to hold the Diyala line, but the two 15 cm. howitzers were to withdraw to Qarara, out of range of British guns on the Tigris right bank.

The following dispositions had been arranged by the British 38th Infantry Brigade for crossing the Diyala during the night of the 8th/9th March. The 6th King's Own and 6th East Lancashire would remain along the river bank in the vicinity of the village; the 6th Loyal North Lancashire, two companies

* In its place, a six-gun German machine gun company was sent to the 156th Regiment.

8th Welch Pioneers and the 72nd Company, R.E., would carry out the crossing on the right of the East Lancashire; the 6th South Lancashire would prolong the line to the right of the North Lancashire; the brigade machine gun company would support the crossing from several positions; and the artillery would open an intense bombardment at midnight.*

Lieutenant-Colonel J. S. N. Harrison, commanding the 6th Loyal North Lancashire, organised his crossing in four columns; each column, lettered A. B. C. D. respectively from the right, consisted of one company with rowers (from East or South Lancashire Regiments) and carriers for the one pontoon allotted. The three other Lancashire battalions were to feint crossings elsewhere; and the East Lancashire were to follow the North Lancashire across the river.

By 11.30 p.m., all units were in their allotted positions with preparations completed, and half an hour later the pontoons were launched under cover of the artillery bombardment. "A" Column's pontoon reached the further bank successfully, but was sunk by hostile fire on its return journey. "B" column made two successful trips before the rowers were all hit and the pontoon sunk; and, a little later, made two more trips with two fresh pontoons before these were sunk also. "C" Column made six trips before its pontoon was sunk; and "D" Column's pontoon could not be launched owing to the steepness of the river bank. There were no more pontoons at hand and it was an hour and a half before a further six arrived. Two of these were rendered unfit for use by the heavy Turkish fire† before they could be launched. As daybreak was now approaching, it was decided that further attempts must once more be abandoned for a time.

The hundred odd of the North Lancashire, who had crossed, occupied, with intervals between the three parties, a length of about three hundred yards on the opposite bank, encountering heavy hostile fire and then a series of counter-attacks, which caused them heavy casualties. Captain O. A. Reid, commanding "C" party, finding his numbers reduced from 60 to 15, joined "B" party and, calling in "A" party to him, launched a bombing counter-attack. This cleared his front and enabled him to withdraw his men gradually downstream to a small bend in the embankment, opposite "D" crossing point, where he decided to take up his position.

* Its barrage was to be arranged to give the enemy the impression that the crossing would again be attempted at the village.

† The Turks were using star shells to light up the scene.

Here with his gallant band he beat off a succession of attacks, which continued till daybreak; and in which and in the previous fighting his battalion incurred 100 casualties.*

The Turkish account of their attempts to drive out this British detachment affords a fine testimony to the gallant tenacity of these men of Lancashire. The Turkish 2/44th Regiment, in a series of determined efforts, suffered very heavy casualties, including their commander and most of their other officers. The regimental commander, arriving at the front about 2 a.m., led the 3rd Battalion and the remnants of the 2nd Battalion† forward in person to the attack no less than five times. This regiment, which had played a distinguished part at Ctesiphon, Dujaila and Sannaiyat, did its utmost to add to its fine record and lost many officers and hundreds of men. But, as Muhammad Amin says: "The small result of all these bloody assaults was to confine to the palm grove near the crossing place an enemy force estimated at fifty to sixty men and two machine guns."

The commander of the 51st Turkish Division, realising from the heavy firing that an important fight was in progress, moved the 9th Regiment to Qarara from the point where it was waiting to cross the Tigris and sent forward one of its battalions with two machine guns to support the 44th Regiment. At 5 a.m., still without information of what had happened, Divisional headquarters moved two battalions 7th Regiment and two batteries to Qarara, also from the Tigris bank. About an hour later, receiving news of the situation, they ordered the whole of the 9th Regiment forward to attack in conjunction with the 44th Regiment and drive the enemy out at all costs. This attack was to be covered by the 15 cm. and 10·5 cm. howitzers at Qarara; but it was found that the British guns were out of range; and at 7.20 a.m. a report from Reshid Bey, commanding 44th Regiment, said that further attacks by daylight would probably fail and that it would be better to wait till dark. The Corps commander thereupon ordered the 9th Regiment to be withdrawn, artillery fire along the Diyala line to be maintained throughout the day, the British to be prevented from sending reinforcements across the Diyala, and, after all buildings round the North Lancashire detachment had been destroyed, an attack on it

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* The 6th East Lancashire had forty casualties also. Captain Reid was awarded the Victoria Cross for this action.

† It is not clear whether any of the 1st Battalion, which held the line to the south, participated in these attacks.

to be delivered at nightfall. Muhammad Amin attributes the failure of the Turkish attacks to the effective and close British covering fire, the shortage of Turkish gun ammunition, the inferior handling of Turkish tactical units by non-commissioned officers after the loss of their officers, the demoralisation from heavy casualties and loss of leaders, and the physical weakness of the men.

On the Tigris right bank the British Cavalry Division had advanced in the meantime by the route taken by General Thomson's column the previous day and since improved by infantry from the 14th Division; and by 7 p.m., it reached a point on the river bank about five and a half miles above Bawi.* Here it changed direction so as to strike the Mahmudiya–Baghdad road just south of the Shawa Khan ruins, whence it intended to move direct on Baghdad. There had been no previous reconnaissance of the route; the maps issued were inaccurate; the whole of the area to be traversed was intersected by many deep canals requiring ramping before they could be crossed; and just before crossing at Bawi three changes had been made in the Cavalry Division headquarters staff. Progress was consequently difficult and slow.

As a result of aerial reconnaissance, information reached General Crocker at 9.30 p.m. that two lines of new Turkish trenches had been seen that afternoon; one, about three miles long, along the Umm at Tubul sandhills; and the other, about five miles long, between Tel Aswad and the Tigris.

After this the Cavalry Division lost direction, but did not discover it had done so till about 2 a.m., when it found itself on the Mahmudiya–Qarara road instead of on the Mahmudiya–Baghdad road. Patrols then sent westward could find no other road. But, as the Baghdad road must be in that direction, the division moved westward, encountering so many deep canals that its progress dropped to less than a mile an hour.

About 6 a.m. on the 9th March, just as it was getting light, the leading cavalry brigade (6th) found itself within about half a mile of some sandhills to its right front, which were occupied by Turks; and about the same time an officer's patrol† reported having reached other sandhills, a little farther north on the Turkish left flank, from which it had seen a

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* General Thomson received no information of this cavalry movement and only learnt of it several hours later.

† Of 21st Cavalry under Captain A. D. Magnay.

long line of trenches below stretching westward and occupied by Turks who were evidently quite unaware of the proximity of the British. The commander of the 6th Cavalry Brigade suggested to General Crocker that the Cavalry Division should gallop the position and stampede the enemy; but the latter did not agree and decided to move westward to gain the enemy's right flank.

About the same hour, the supporting brigade group of the 7th Division under General Davies, consisting of the 28th Infantry Brigade with a field artillery brigade and two sapper companies, reached a point about a mile south-east of Shawa Khan, where it halted and took steps to get into touch with the Cavalry Division. Its crossing of the Tigris had been delayed by a break in the bridge and it had not started its advance till about 1.30 a.m.; after which, however, it had experienced little difficulty. The remainder of the 7th Division did not begin to cross the Bawi bridge till 5.30 a.m. The head of the 3rd Division had reached Bawi the previous evening, but one of its sapper companies and seven of its infantry battalions (8th and 9th Brigades) were still in rear along the Tigris line of communication.

To return to the Diyala. At 7.50 a.m., General O'Dowda reported: "The party of North Lancashire, about 60 strong, on right bank Diyala are well dug in and comfortable. They are quite able to hang on. Arrangements are being made to send ammunition and bombs across to them." By the same hour reports from General Gunning, seven or eight miles north of Diyala village, showed the enemy to be holding the opposite bank in his vicinity in some strength. Fifty Turkish cavalry and many mounted Arabs had also been observed to the northward on the Diyala left bank. General Marshall had been warned during the night by General Headquarters to be careful of his right flank towards Baquba, as Turkish reinforcements from Hamadan were said to be due in the vicinity; and at 9.20 a.m. he issued orders for a brigade group from the 14th Division to take up a position as flank guard about three miles north-east of Diyala village and for General Gunning's column to withdraw behind it and rejoin the 14th Division. General O'Dowda was, at the same time, instructed to maintain his hold on the Diyala right bank and prepare to complete the passage of the river that night.

During the 9th March, many expedients were tried by General O'Dowda to get ammunition and bombs across to the North Lancashire detachment; but they were all frustrated

by the enemy's fire. Beyond these attempts and periodical artillery bombardments, no serious operations were attempted on either side.

On the Tigris right bank, General Davies, getting into signalling communication with the Cavalry Division about 7.30 a.m., heard from it that the enemy, who (though he had disclosed no guns) appeared to be in some strength, was holding the Tel Aswad line; and that the Cavalry Division was going to move round the enemy's right.

According to the Turkish account, their trenches on the Tel Aswad line were in groups, not connected up and only partially constructed, and the position was too extended for the force detailed to hold it. This was composed of the 18th Cavalry, 43rd Regiment (three battalions) and a field battery, i.e., an effective strength of about 200 sabres, 3 guns and 1,500 rifles. Two 10·5 cm. howitzers were behind the railway embankment in rear to cover the right flank, while the remainder of the 52nd Division was in the Umm at Tubul position on which it was still working. Its distribution here was as follows: At Tel Ataf, on the extreme right, was the 2/64th Regiment with a 10·5 cm. howitzer; astride the railway and along the line to five hundred yards south of it were the 3/40th Regiment and a field battery, with the 2/40th in reserve; and on their left along the line to the Tigris were two battalions 37th Regiment. A third field battery and two Austrian mountain guns without horses were in reserve.

The British Cavalry Division moved westward across the front of General Davies's brigade, now advancing; and, coming under hostile shell fire, its two horse artillery batteries came into action a short distance west-north-westward of Shawa Khan. At 9 a.m. General Davies sent forward the Leicestershire from a point about half a mile north of Shawa Khan to clear up the situation, informing them that if an attack became necessary it would be delivered against the enemy's right. About this time also the Cavalry recommenced their westward movement, but their horses were so exhausted, having been without water for twenty-four hours, that, before their patrols had found the enemy's right flank, General Crocker felt bound to withdraw and send them to water at the nearest point on the Tigris. He sent General Davies a message, which reached the latter at 10.40 a.m., informing him of this and saying that the Cavalry Division, after watering, would come up again on the left flank.*

* General Crocker left one of his squadrons to cover General Davies's left.

The Leicestershire advanced slowly, encountering hostile fire, till they arrived within about four hundred yards of the enemy's line. They then received orders to dig themselves in and await the development of the main attack against the enemy's right which General Davies was sending two battalions to carry out; and in which attack they were to co-operate. After the enemy position had been cleared, the Leicestershire would await further orders.

In the absence of the Cavalry Division and as the enemy was understood to be holding a second line at Umm at Tubul, General Davies decided that the turning movement of his main attack must be a wide one. Just after 11 a.m. he ordered the 51st Sikhs and 56th Rifles, the whole under Lieutenant-Colonel H. A. F. Magrath, to move a mile west of Shawa Khan and then north-westward to turn the enemy's right flank. The 53rd Sikhs would remain at Shawa Khan as brigade reserve. The 51st and 56th, advancing in line in this order from the right about noon from a point a mile west of Shawa Khan, soon came under hostile gun and rifle fire and found that the enemy's position extended, apparently for some distance, beyond their own left. Continuing to advance steadily, they got within seven hundred yards of the enemy's line but could get no further.

General Fane (commanding the 7th Division) had, meanwhile, received instructions to push forward in the direction of Baghdad and the Cavalry Division had been told to operate west and north of any hostile position encountered. In addition to his own (7th) Division, General Thomson's brigade group, which was to leave Shaikh Aswad at 11 a.m. and move towards the Iron Bridge, was placed under General Fane's orders. General Fane, pushing ahead of his main body, reached Shawa Khan at 12.50 p.m., and found the situation as already depicted. He at once sent orders to General Thomson to push up the 35th Brigade into line on the right of the Leicestershire; and just before 2 p.m., as the 19th Brigade was approaching Shawa Khan, he sent two of its battalions and two batteries of the 56th Brigade, R.F.A., to reinforce the 51st Sikhs and 56th Rifles and push their attack home with the utmost vigour.* All the other artillery which had reached the front was ordered into action†; the remainder of the 19th Brigade

* Colonel Magrath was wounded at 1 p.m. Lieutenant-Colonel Prissick (56th Rifles) then took over and remained in command for the rest of the day.

† A total of eight batteries arrived before nightfall, but it is not certain when some of them reached the scene of action.

was to form Divisional Reserve near Shawa Khan ; and orders were sent to the 21st Brigade to come up as quickly as possible.

General Fane estimated that the Turks were holding the Tel Aswad line with 3,000 infantry and 30 guns. But according to the Turkish account, they had only reinforced this line with three companies of the 1/37th Regiment, which brought their total rifle strength there up to about 1,800 ; and, including guns firing from the Tigris left bank, they do not appear to have had more than twenty in action, though this point is not quite clear. The Turks had a very good commanding observation post in what they called the Khar pavilion, near the Iron Bridge, whence there was an unobstructed view over the plain for nine or ten miles ; and from there the Turkish army and 52nd Division commanders watched the battle. Muhammad Amin, who was also there, describes the very effective fire of their artillery and the heavy casualties they inflicted. But it is not easy to reconcile his account with the recorded operations of our own troops ; and our casualties were certainly not as heavy as he believes them to have been.

During the morning, the Turkish XVIII Corps commander, coming to the conclusion that the main British advance was taking place up the Tigris right bank as he had anticipated, ordered, first two battalions of the 7th Regiment, and then the whole of the 7th and 9th Regiments, of the 51st Division, with a certain amount of artillery,* to move from the Tigris left bank to the right bank to support the 52nd Division ; leaving the defence of the Tigris left bank to the 14th Division and 44th Regiment. None of the units ordered from the left bank arrived, however, on the right bank in time to take part in the fighting on the 9th March.

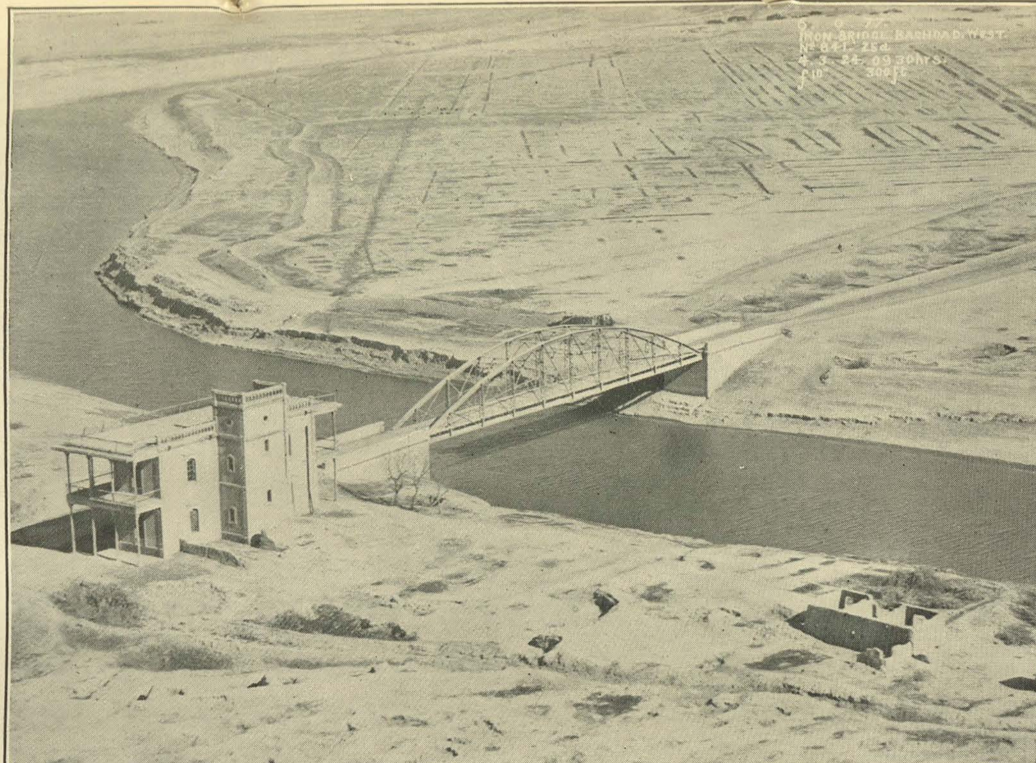
The British attack against what was believed to be the Turkish right did not develop as quickly as had been hoped. The 28th and 92nd Punjabis of the 19th Brigade experienced difficulty in locating the position of the 51st Sikhs and 56th Rifles† and suffered a good many casualties, while advancing, from the heavy and accurate Turkish shell fire. They pushed on steadily and in very good order, however, reaching the firing line about 5 p.m. But in face of the enemy's stubborn opposition the attack could make little further progress.

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* Number of guns is uncertain, but two 12 cm. and two 15 cm. howitzers were included.

† Their right appears to have been rather over a mile west of the Leicestershire left.

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The Iron Bridge and the Khar Pavilion.

The 53rd Sikhs, sent up to reinforce the Leicestershire, had by this time come up in line on their right; and the 35th Brigade, encountering heavy gun fire from both banks of the Tigris, was moving up into line between the 53rd and the Tigris. By 6 p.m. the 35th Brigade was in touch with the 53rd Sikhs; the 125th Rifles of the 19th Brigade had moved up in support of the Leicestershire and 53rd; and two battalions 21st Brigade, just arrived at Shawa Khan, had joined the Divisional Reserve. The Cavalry Division had returned from watering during the afternoon; but it was a hot day and the horses were feeling the effects of the work they had done, much of it without water, since the 5th March, with the result that several of them dropped from exhaustion; the cavalry came under heavy enemy shell fire; and they failed to get round the Turkish right flank or to ascertain exactly where it lay. The division went into bivouac just out of enemy gun range, apparently not far from Shawa Khan; but again there was no water for horses that night.

At 6 p.m., General Fane issued orders to his advanced infantry to consolidate the positions they were in and hold them for the night, four batteries of artillery being detailed to support them. The remaining four batteries which had reached the front and the transport bivouacked south of Shawa Khan. Arrangements were made to supply the thirsty advanced infantry with water, but it was only with difficulty and not till daybreak on the 10th that all had been supplied and their water-bottles filled. Throughout the day the British and Indian troops, fighting with dash and spirit and encountering unexpectedly stubborn opposition, had incurred 768 casualties, of which rather more than half had occurred in the four battalions of the left attack, the 56th Rifles having suffered no fewer than 196 casualties.

Communication between the British forces on the Tigris right bank and headquarters near Bawi broke down during the day; and till well after dark neither General Cobbe (who had established his headquarters at Shaikh Aswad) nor General Maude appear to have received any clear account of what was happening. About 10 p.m., General Cobbe telegraphed to the 7th Division commander saying that he was pleased at the progress made, of which he had only just become acquainted, and he asked if any reinforcements were required; while about an hour and a half later General Headquarters asked General Cobbe and General Crocker for clear and concise reports of the day's operations, in which, said

General Maude, no satisfactory results seemed to have been obtained. Pending his further instructions, no operations were to be undertaken unless the enemy retreated. At 1.20 a.m. on the 10th, General Cobbe received from General Fane a reply to his telegram of 10 p.m., in which the 7th Division commander said he would like another infantry brigade and a howitzer battery and also asked that the Cavalry Division might be instructed to act vigorously on the 7th Division left, towards Baghdad, next day.

Towards evening on the 9th March, the Turkish XVIII Corps commander had come to the Khar pavilion and, after discussing the situation with Halil, decided, with his approval, that it was best for the bulk of the Corps to remain on the Tigris right bank, to meet the probable British attack next morning. Orders were accordingly issued about 9.30 p.m. for a withdrawal from the Tel Aswad line to the Umm at Tubul position, where the 52nd Division was to hold the front from the railway to the Tigris, with the 51st Division in rear of the right flank, ready to reinforce or prolong the line. Muhammad Amin offers the opinion that it would have been better to have held on to the Tel Aswad line, where the Turks had only suffered 95 casualties, as he considers that by reinforcing it that night with another regiment and improving its defences they could have beaten off another British attack next day. In favour of this opinion he instances the superiority in numbers of the British infantry whose attack they had already withstood and the inability of the British cavalry to co-operate owing to lack of water; and he doubts if the British would have attacked again next day, if they had found the Turks maintaining their position, owing to this lack of water.

One of the main results on the Turkish operations of the British advance up the Tigris right bank was the removal of two-thirds of the Turkish 51st Division from the left bank, and the consequent abandonment of the decision to carry out an attack after nightfall on the North Lancashire party on the Diyala right bank. The 44th Regiment, which then received instructions merely to harass the enemy on the Diyala line with minor enterprises, decided, however, to make a further attempt to retrieve its former failures; and at 7.30 p.m. it launched an attack with resolution and self-sacrifice against the North Lancashire detachment. But in the attempt it suffered over 100 casualties, including all its remaining officers, and became so demoralised that it had to be withdrawn. The commander of the 44th Regiment was senior in army rank

to the officer commanding the 14th Division and, according to Muhammad Amin, it was for this reason that the 44th Regiment was acting independently of the 14th Division, whose support it apparently did not seek and did not receive. Whether it is correct to assume that the Turks decided that they could no longer hope to hold the Diyala line and must rely on their Qarara–Tel Muhammad position to stop a further British advance up the Tigris left bank, is not quite clear from the Turkish account. But it seems evident that their XVIII Corps commander and several of their other senior officers saw little chance of being able to defend Baghdad much longer.

The British 13th Division had spent the 9th March in making arrangements to complete the passage of the Diyala during the night. The 38th Infantry Brigade, with the 5th Wiltshire of the 40th Brigade attached, was to cross the river at 4 a.m., on the 10th, while the 8th Cheshire (40th Brigade) were to move up the Tigris in two motor lighters and land above the Diyala. The latter project failed. The lighters started at 11 p.m. ; but the engine of one broke down, and the other, grounding on a sandbank, was only with difficulty hauled out of a precarious situation just before daybreak on the 10th, by the gunboats *Tarantula* and *Snakefly*.

For the Diyala crossing, two columns were formed. One, composed of the 6th East Lancashire, 71st Company, R.E., one company 8th Welch Pioneers and sixty rowers from the 39th Brigade with ten pontoons, was to pass over at the three places where the North Lancashire had crossed the previous night ; and the other, composed of the 5th Wiltshire, 88th Company, R.E., one company 8th Welch Pioneers and sixty rowers 39th Brigade with ten pontoons, was to cross at three places about a thousand yards higher up the river.

After a preliminary heavy bombardment at midnight to deceive the enemy, the crossing was effected at 4 a.m. on the 10th, with little or no opposition and with very few casualties ; the North Lancashire detachment on the right bank being found to be almost without ammunition. By 6 a.m., when the East Lancashire and Wiltshire were all across, the Turks had retired, leaving about 200 prisoners in the hands of the East Lancashire. The remainder of the 38th Brigade then crossed the river in the pontoons and by 10 a.m. were all on the right bank holding a bridgehead to the depth of one mile from the river, with patrols pushed out well beyond. No. 2 Bridging Train had, in the meantime, begun the construction of a bridge

at the village and this was completed at 11.30 a.m., when the remainder of the 13th Division began to cross it. A southerly wind had begun to blow about 9 a.m., and, increasing in strength during the morning, continued throughout the day; with the result that from early afternoon the dust-clouds rendered observation almost impossible.

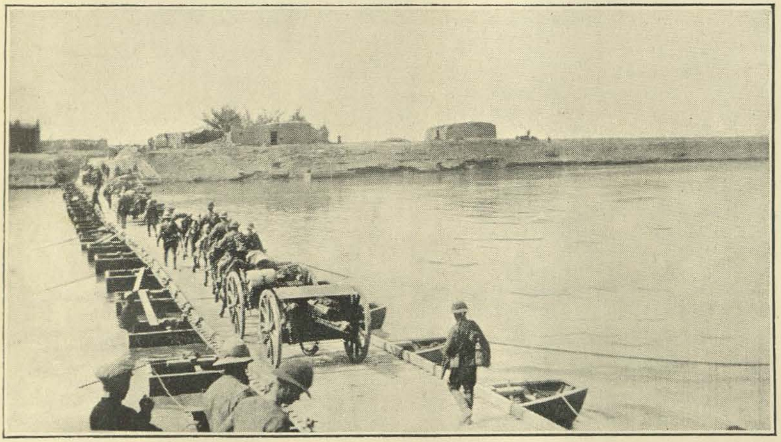
The 13th Division advanced guard (Hertfordshire Yeomanry and 32nd Lancers' squadrons, 39th Infantry Brigade, 8th Welch Pioneers, 55th Brigade, R.F.A., and 72nd Company, R.E.) had all crossed the bridge by 2.30 p.m., and began to advance. Contact with the enemy, which had been lost for some hours, had been established about half an hour earlier, but little opposition was encountered till 4 p.m., when the vanguard was checked by the enemy—apparently his rearguard—holding a line of trenches which ran north-eastward from Qarara for about two and a half miles. Disposed on a frontage of four thousand yards, the 39th Infantry Brigade supported by the 55th Field Artillery Brigade advanced direct against this line, while the 40th Infantry Brigade and the 66th Field Artillery Brigade moved northward to turn the enemy's left flank.* This turning movement, however, was stopped by marshy ground and was abandoned; and at nightfall the 13th Division having suffered about 60 casualties during the day, went into bivouac covered by the 39th Brigade.

It appears from the Turkish account that by 6.30 a.m. on the 10th March, the Turks had withdrawn all their troops back to the Qarara–Tel Muhammad position, which was occupied by the 142nd and 156th Regiments (in this order from the right) with the 33rd Cavalry watching the left flank. The 3rd, 3/64th and 1/22nd Regiments held in rear, facing southward and eastward, the line of the Nazim Pasha embankment, while the 44th Regiment reorganised near Tel Muhammad. The total Turkish strength on this bank of the Tigris is given as 300 sabres, 18 guns and 3,700 rifles; and their commander appears during the afternoon and evening to have sent his Corps Headquarters discouraging reports in regard to his ability to withstand the British advance.

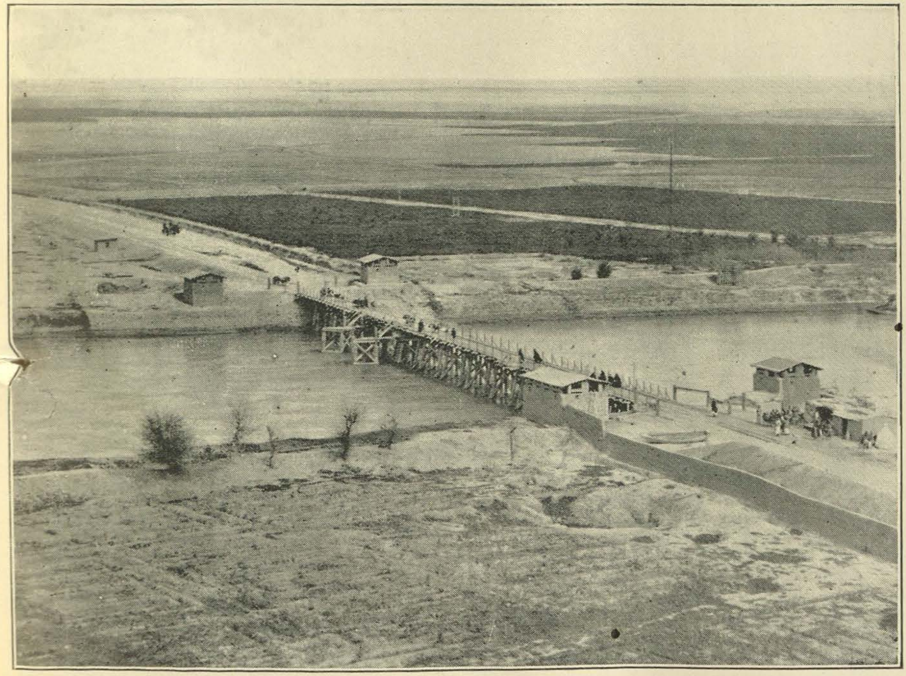
On the Tigris right bank, reports from his infantry patrols that the enemy was evacuating the Tel Aswad line began to reach General Fane about 5 a.m., on the 10th; and, in

* The brigade group under General Carey which had been sent to guard the right flank when General Gunning's column withdrew (see page 229) had received orders to cross the Diyala to its front to co-operate in the attack. But the difficulty of crossing the river in pontoons delayed it till too late.

To face page 236.



Bridge across the Diyala: March 1917.



'Lancashire Bridge,' spanning the Diyala; 1924.

accordance with his instructions from General Cobbe to act vigorously if the enemy retreated, he decided to push forward at once. His infantry brigades were rather mixed up as the result of the previous day's fighting, but in his orders, issued at 6.20 a.m., he directed that battalions should rejoin their own brigades during the advance as opportunity offered. The leading portions of his force were to move towards Baghdad by the Iron Bridge in three columns. The centre column (28th Brigade), moving on a frontage of one thousand yards, was to advance with its left on the railway,* with the right column (35th Brigade) on its right; and the left column (19th Brigade) was to advance with its right on the railway. The 21st Brigade was to form Divisional Reserve.

The Cavalry Division, acting independently under General Maude's direct orders, was saddled up and ready to move at 6 a.m.; and at 6.30 a.m. it moved off to the Tigris to water, apparently unaware that the enemy had begun to retire and that General Fane had ordered an advance. The horses were urgently in need of water, which, so far as had been ascertained the previous day, could not be had nearer than the Tigris; and the latest order from General Maude, issued at 11.35 p.m. the previous night, forbade further offensive operations pending his further instructions unless the enemy retreated.† On its way to water, about 7.30 a.m., the Cavalry Division received a message from General Maude,‡ which resulted in the 6th Cavalry Brigade being recalled and ordered to push on vigorously towards Kadhimain and operate against the enemy's right flank so as to cut his line of retreat. "S" Battery, R.H.A., and a party of mounted sappers were also sent with the 6th Cavalry Brigade. The 7th Cavalry Brigade was allowed to go on to water, so as to be fresh and ready to take up operations when it became necessary for the 6th Cavalry Brigade to withdraw to water.

At dawn and before General Fane had issued his orders, the 35th Infantry Brigade, following its patrols, had pushed forward in accordance with its general instructions and by 6.30 a.m. had reached a line running westward from a point on the Tigris bank about six hundred yards south of Karada

* The railway referred to is evidently the line of the old railway embankment just to the west of the Tel Aswad mounds.

† This was held to cancel the order issued by General Maude at 3.45 p.m., on the 9th, instructing the Cavalry, in co-operation with the 7th Division, to cut off the enemy's retreat by encircling Baghdad on the west and north-west.

‡ Neither the message nor its gist are given in the records.

Island. On getting General Fane's order, the 28th Brigade also advanced and at about 10 a.m. the 53rd Sikhs and the Leicestershire came up in line on the left of the 35th Brigade. The enemy guns had opened fire about 7.30 a.m. and by this time both our right and central columns were under continuous gun and rifle fire. General Peebles, commanding the 19th Brigade, had taken over command of the left column, which the 51st Sikhs and 56th Rifles had left to rejoin the 28th Brigade. By 10 a.m. also the 6th Cavalry Brigade had come up on the left of the infantry and the mounted sappers had cut the Decauville railway.

The Turkish account shows that by the morning of the 10th March they had concentrated a force of about 200 sabres, 30 guns (including four 12 cm. and 15 cm. howitzers), 26 machine guns and 5,300 rifles to hold the Umm at Tubul position. Their 18th Cavalry Regiment was watching the right flank, with the 2/64th Infantry Regiment at Tel Ataf; seven battalions* of the 52nd Division were holding the front from the Decauville railway inclusive to the Tigris; and the six battalions of the 7th and 9th Regiments of the 51st Division were occupying and entrenching the sandhills north-west of the Decauville railway and reserve positions to the right rear. Owing to the mounds, canals and embankments in front of the left of its line, which would afford more cover to the assailants than the ground to the rest of its front, the 52nd Division had placed the bulk of its strength there. The wind that arose about 9 a.m., blew the dust straight into the faces of the Turkish defenders and rendered observation very difficult.

About 10 a.m., receiving aeroplane reports giving the general line of the Turkish position and realising from the hostile fire hitherto encountered that the Turks meant to make a stand, General Fane decided to alter his dispositions.† He accordingly directed the 35th Brigade to extend its frontage up to two thousand yards from the Tigris, whence the 19th Brigade was to carry on the line up to the railway, and the 28th Brigade was to draw out of the fight and form up about one thousand yards north-west of Shawa Khan to form Divisional Reserve. At 11.30 a.m., when this readjustment seemed to be proceeding satisfactorily, General Fane ordered the 21st Brigade forward to advance with its right on the railway, on a 350-yard

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* 37th, 40th and 43rd Regiments.

† General Cobbe had ridden out and was by this time at General Fane's headquarters.

frontage, and push its attack home. With this attack, which was to be made about 3 p.m., the 19th and 35th Brigades were to co-operate.

About noon, however, the wind increased to a gale and the clouds of dust everywhere, except near the Tigris where there was cultivation and less dust, made it impossible to see more than 150 yards to the front and often nothing like so far. The 19th Brigade, unable to discern either the railway, the enemy's position or the 35th Brigade, could not take up its allotted position; and the 21st Brigade was consequently ordered to stand fast until the 19th Brigade did reach its position. In striving to do so, this brigade had a very trying time, blinded by the dust, suffering considerably from thirst, and frequently coming under enemy shell fire*; and it was not till the evening that it got into touch with the 35th Brigade. It was expected that, as usual, the wind would die down in the evening; and plans were made for an advance after dark. But the gale continued for the greater part of the night; and, although at one time the 35th Brigade commander requested permission to attack with his brigade, the conditions elsewhere were so unfavourable that the orders for the advance were cancelled. Patrols from the 35th Brigade during the earlier part of the night met with enemy opposition, but later they were able to advance unopposed; and by 2 a.m., the brigade occupied the enemy's position, which had been vacated.

During the morning of the 10th the 7th Cavalry Brigade relieved the 6th Cavalry Brigade, which then withdrew to the Tigris to water. By 2.30 p.m., the patrols of the leading regiments of the 7th Cavalry Brigade had reached a point about nine miles north-west of Shawa Khan, but were experiencing great difficulty in carrying out reconnaissance owing to the clouds of dust and the swarms of Arabs.† Gaining touch, however, with two squadrons of hostile cavalry, the 7th Cavalry Brigade followed them up and one of its advanced squadrons crossed the Mahsudiya canal about five miles westward of Baghdad. A few enemy infantry were encountered on the line of this canal, which, though dry, proved to be a serious obstacle about nine feet deep. Reconnaissance was now directed more to the eastward and our patrols reported that enemy infantry were holding a line for two or three miles north-westward of

* The brigade suffered over 100 casualties, including 81 in the 28th Punjabis, from this shell fire.

† During the morning General Jones, commanding 7th Cavalry Brigade, took over command of the Cavalry Division from General Crocker.

the Iron Bridge. At 4.30 p.m., the 7th Cavalry Brigade withdrew and watered in a canal about eight miles north-west of Shawa Khan. In the meantime the 6th Cavalry Brigade had come up again on the left of the infantry but could do little owing to the sandstorm; and at 7 p.m., the Cavalry Division was ordered to concentrate near Shaikh Aswad, so as to bivouac for the night near water. The men and horses, some of whom did not reach their bivouac till 2 a.m. on the 11th, were all greatly fatigued; and many of the horses had dropped during the day from exhaustion.

During the 10th March, the Ist Corps Cavalry, the 7th Infantry Brigade and two Sapper companies with some artillery of the 3rd Division crossed the Bawi bridge to the Tigris right bank; and of these the cavalry and two howitzer batteries reached Shawa Khan in the afternoon.

In the course of the day the Turkish commanders felt considerable anxiety lest the British cavalry should manage to cut the Baghdad–Samarra railway.* As the gale was in their faces they experienced even greater difficulty than we did in observation; and, though from time to time their guns managed to find targets, the Turks frequently mistook our cavalry for infantry. For instance, between 2.30 and 3 p.m., the Turkish 7th and 9th Regiments both reported two hostile infantry brigades with artillery and machine guns marching north about four miles away from their front line. Halil, watching the battle from the Khar pavilion, came to the conclusion that the men seen were dismounted cavalry and gave orders for a counter-attack to be launched against them. Neither the XVIII Corps commander nor the 51st Division commander, who were also in the Khar pavilion, would agree, however, that they were not infantry and deprecated a premature counter-attack until the point was cleared up. Halil agreed to postponement; and soon further reports came in stating that most of the British infantry opposite the left of the Turkish position were withdrawing and moving westward, where an enveloping movement against the Turkish right was developing.

About 4 p.m., Halil issued an order saying that the XVIII Corps was to accept battle in the Umm at Tubul position and

* The Turkish account shows that, throughout their retreat from Kut, the Turks felt great anxiety in regard to what General Maude's superior cavalry might be able to achieve. Their mounted Arab auxiliaries seem to have either deserted them altogether or to have been of little use, as they are never mentioned.

make every endeavour to defeat the enemy. The Corps commander, it is said, deeming it impossible for the available Turkish force to withstand the British advance for any length of time, ignored this order; and contented himself with informing his Corps that the 156th Regiment would not go to Baquba, nor the 64th to Falluja (as had apparently been intended) and with ordering the 44th Regiment and some artillery to cross from the left to the right bank of the Tigris.

About 5 p.m., as a result of the reports he received and of his own observations, the XVIII Corps commander came to the conclusion that a British cavalry and an infantry division were moving against his right flank with a view to cutting his communications and surrounding him; and, in consequence, half an hour later he ordered the 52nd Divisional Reserve from his left to move over and reinforce his right. We know how entirely mistaken he was; but it is possible from this instance to realise some of the perplexing and deceptive effects of the sandstorm. Sunset, says the Turkish account, put an end to the enemy's encircling movement. The Turks then heard that our cavalry had begun to withdraw at 4.30 p.m.; and after that, they say, our infantry showed no signs of activity except that patrols continued to feel towards the Turkish front.

Soon after sunset, Halil held a council of war with the XVIII Corps and 51st and 52nd Division commanders in the Khar pavilion. Halil, it is said, impressed by the disgrace of abandoning Baghdad without a struggle, was anxious to stand and fight, deeming the moral gain to be worth a few thousand casualties. But the Corps and Divisional commanders were all opposed to such a course. They had insufficient troops to counter next day the inevitable British encircling movement and consequently might have to retreat through Baghdad, which would be disastrous; the latest reports from the Tigris left bank showed that the 14th Division was unable to withstand the British advance and might also be forced to retreat through Baghdad; the ammunition supply gave cause for anxiety; and on all military grounds it seemed better, while they retained liberty of action, to break off the fight during the night and withdraw, even though it meant abandoning Baghdad. Halil retired with his Chief of Staff to another room to deliberate; but returned ten minutes later to say that he agreed to a withdrawal that night. His reluctance to come to this decision is intelligible enough. Not only had Baghdad—in Turkish possession for several

centuries—many historical, religious and sentimental associations for the Turkish nation, but without it their hold on Mesopotamia became precarious. Faced by inexorable facts, however, the Turkish commander was forced to realise that further delay in withdrawing would only jeopardise the safety of his whole force.

At 8 p.m., the XVIII Corps commander issued his orders for the retreat. After praising his officers and men for their part in the past fighting in Mesopotamia, of which, he said, every man of them might ever be proud, he pointed out that military necessity alone demanded their withdrawal. All the supply columns, ambulances, ammunition columns, 51st and 52nd Divisions, heavy artillery, Austrian mountain guns with the 52nd Division, anti-aircraft guns and the Corps Cavalry were to withdraw along the Tigris right bank by the Baghdad–Samarra road to a position eleven miles north of Kadhimain. The 2/64th Regiment at Tel Ataf was to move to Falluja; and the 14th Division, with the Austrian mountain guns attached to it and the 33rd Cavalry, were to retire on the Tigris left bank to a position about nineteen miles north of Baghdad, though if pressed they might retire farther northward.

At 10 p.m., Halil telegraphed to the Turkish Commander-in-Chief, recapitulating the events of the last few days and continuing :—

> " In face of this attack which the enemy has carried on without ceasing for three months with very superior numbers and plentiful ammunition, I find that the XVIII Corps is almost at a standstill and its *moral* from the commander to the most junior man so broken that I am convinced that, if battle is accepted with the whole of the enemy's force to-morrow, Baghdad will be lost and the whole force with its guns will be captured. Realising the necessity of breaking off the action and restoring the moral and material strength of the army at a distance, I am faced with the sorrowful necessity of abandoning Baghdad and withdrawing the XVIII Corps on the night of the 10th/11th along the Tigris to the north.
>
> The 51st and 52nd Divisions will retire along the right bank, the 14th along the left, towards Samarra. The Euphrates detachment* which arrived at Musaiyib to-day,

* Appears to have consisted of 1/64th, 3/156th and 4/156th Regiments, with six guns and some gendarmerie.

will go to Falluja and block the river to the enemy. This detachment will be reinforced by a battalion from here.

A force will be detached to Baquba from the retiring army and will cover the concentration of the XIII Corps at Khaniqin . . . On the 9th March the head of the XIII Corps had reached Karind, its rear guard being east of Kermanshah."

The total effective strength of the XVIII Corps on the 10th March is given as about 500 sabres, 9,000 rifles, and 48 guns, while that of General Maude's Tigris army was 3,864 sabres, 41,479 rifles and 174 guns.*

Describing the Turkish retreat during the night 10th/11th March, Muhammad Amin says :—

" After signing the order for the evacuation of Baghdad, whose lights could be seen afar off through the darkness of the night and the clouds of the storm, the Army Commander got into his car as if he wished to escape from the scene and went to headquarters at Kadhimain. We all went together and when we arrived the storm continued to rain its blows of sand upon us, giving us no peace even in our tents. This devil of nature, which seemed angry at our sins, was taking vengeance on all of us and on all the thousands who were in the neighbourhood.

We arrived at the station about midnight. The night was very dark and everything was in terrible confusion. There was little rolling stock in the station, while the amount of arms, ammunition, material and men was immense. Amidst all this were aeroplanes and airmen. The storm had prevented the use of aircraft during the last few days and aeroplanes had been brought here with great difficulty. Four wagons were allotted to three machines which could not fly. In spite of the storm they were to be loaded and sent to Samarra ; but unfortunately they were not taken away. At 6.30 next

* The fighting strength in sabres and rifles of the remaining British forces on the Tigris, Euphrates and Karun lines and at Bushire, totalled 2,373 sabres and 28,937 rifles, while there were reinforcements of drafts and three fresh Indian battalions in the country totalling 115 sabres and 6,018 rifles. The *ration* strength of the whole force on that day totalled 274,491, i.e., about three times its effective fighting strength, being made up as follows :—

British officers	4,882
Indian officers	2,124
British other ranks	66,917
Indian other ranks	81,680
Followers	118,888

morning, when hostile cavalry were rumoured to be approaching, they were destroyed by the German mechanics.

One 3rd class passenger carriage and a few wagons were allotted to the field headquarters of the Army. While the wagons were being loaded with ammunition, news arrived that a boat loaded with ammunition from Baghdad had been abandoned at Kadhimain. . . . . We left the station full of material, stores, sick and wounded without seeing if a plan to save it would have been feasible. In our train, which had a good number of wagons, were Army Headquarters, stores, ammunition, and about 700 wounded. In the station only one engine and twelve wagons remained for a second train.

We had hardly left the station when the dark outlines of Baghdad began to show up in flashes and flames of fire. The flashes and explosions, which were heard, sometimes clearly, sometimes almost imperceptibly amidst the swirl of the storm, were the signs of demolition which it had been decided to carry out about midnight but which had been hurriedly arranged a few hours before."

The 51st Division, told to leave strong patrols in the position and to concentrate at the Iron Bridge at 10 p.m., actually marched at 11 p.m., and learnt that the 44th Regiment could not cross by the Baghdad bridge of boats, which had been broken by the storm, and had to remain on the left bank. The progress of the 51st Division was very slow, owing to the darkness, the storm and to the confused and crowded mass of supply, ammunition and baggage columns in front of it. It managed to get off from near Kadhimain at about 2 a.m.

"This delay of three hours would have been most useful to an enterprising and active enemy. A small force of cavalry or a brave and resolute detachment would have created havoc in this desperate situation, which was due to faulty arrangements. Most fortunately the attackers were entirely unaware of what was happening and, judging by the attack which was to be made next day at 11 a.m. (*sic*) they were trying to recuperate afar off from the fatigues of the last forty-eight hours."

The 52nd Division, which was to form the rear guard on the Tigris right bank, was to concentrate near the Iron Bridge covering its withdrawal and concentration with strong patrols, which were to retire half an hour after their main body had retired; and the guns of the division were to fire up to the

last minute. Though concentrated at 10 p.m., as ordered, the division had to wait for two hours for the 51st Division to march off. Even then its progress was much delayed by the storm, which in the darkness made it impossible to see for more than a few paces ahead. By daybreak its rear party was only a few kilometres northward of Kadhimain, and it had then to halt for some hours, as the baggage, ammunition and ambulance columns blocked the way; and it was not till about noon that it reached Mushahida, some twenty miles northward of Kadhimain. During the retirement it was attacked by Arabs, of whom eighteen were captured and shot subsequently at headquarters.

The 14th Division, with orders to retire up the Tigris left bank to Khan Jadida,* moved off about midnight, taking with it the police and gendarmes who had remained in Baghdad till the last minute, the line of communication personnel, the Town Commandant and administrative units. It could not find the Austrian mountain battery and had to leave it behind; and reached its destination at about 1 p.m., on the 11th.

General Maude issued an order at 6.20 p.m., on the 10th March, based on the situation as it then was, which said that operations in progress were to continue. But, in the early hours of the 11th March, the advanced British infantry on both banks of the Tigris reported the positions in front of them to have been evacuated. On the left bank the 39th Brigade reported at 1.35 a.m. that it occupied the enemy's trenches and that Baghdad appeared to be in flames; and on the right bank, as already described, the 35th Brigade occupied the enemy's position at 2 a.m. Our infantry had thus done their task well and had lost little time.

General Fane on the right bank issued orders at 3 a.m. for an advance. The 21st Brigade was to move west of the railway towards the Iron Bridge, preceded by strong patrols acting boldly; but the brigade was told not to get seriously engaged. The 19th Brigade, with many of its men incapacitated by thirst, was to stand fast and move at dawn to get water from the Tigris; and at 4.10 a.m., the 28th Brigade in Divisional Reserve was also ordered to advance. At 4.17 a.m., General Cobbe† telegraphed to General Fane:

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* On Tigris left bank, about ten miles due east of Mushahida.

† General Cobbe, who had returned to Shaikh Aswad the previous evening, only heard at 4.0 a.m. of the Turkish withdrawal, through the mistake of a staff officer.

"There appears to be no one in front of you. Why send patrols? Form advanced guard at once and march into Baghdad."

General Fane issued an order accordingly, detailing the 35th Brigade to form advanced guard; but, before this order reached it, patrols of the 21st Brigade had already passed the Iron Bridge and just before 6 a.m., a patrol of the Black Watch under 2nd Lieutenant Houston occupied Baghdad railway station, which was about three-quarters of a mile outside the city. The headquarters of the 21st and 35th Brigades and 7th Division all reached the Iron Bridge between 7.0 and 7.25 a.m., and the 35th Brigade received orders to occupy the city. This was in accordance with arrangements made by General Maude six days previously that a British cavalry regiment (13th Hussars) a battery of artillery (A/66th Battery, R.F.A.) and the 35th Infantry Brigade were to garrison Baghdad. The 35th Brigade, led by the 1/5th Buffs, moved off at 8.30 a.m., reached the right bank part of the city just before 9 a.m.*—where the 2/4th Gurkhas were left to maintain order—and the Tigris bank about quarter of an hour later, to find, however, that the bridge had been destroyed.

At 8 a.m., General Maude issued an operation order saying that the enemy was evacuating Baghdad. The Cavalry Division had been directed on Kadhimain and was to pursue beyond there up the right bank; the Ist and IIIrd Corps were advancing on Baghdad; and the gunboats were proceeding there at full speed. As soon as the city had been occupied, the Ist Corps was to take measures to secure it from the west and north-west, and the IIIrd Corps similar measures from the north and Baquba direction. The leading division of the Ist Corps was to concentrate north-west of Baghdad; the force moving up the right bank from Bawi to concentrate near Karada Island; and the troops near Bawi to guard the bridge there. The IIIrd Corps was to be disposed, partly at a point on the Tigris three miles north of Baghdad and partly near the Tigris-Diyala junction, where it was to be responsible for the security of the two bridges which had by then been constructed across the Diyala.

On the Tigris left bank, the 13th Division started at 6.30 a.m., to advance on Baghdad. The bulk of the division moved along the route near the Tigris, whilst the 32nd Lancers and 40th Infantry Brigade advanced along the track leading past

* The 1/5th Buffs was, therefore, the first battalion to enter Baghdad city.

the Tel Muhammad mounds. At 9.30 a.m., the divisional commander received orders not to enter the city. But part of his advanced guard—Hertfordshire Yeomanry and 6th King's Own Regiment—and the 32nd Lancers, had just entered. As it soon became clear that the 35th Brigade would take some time to cross the Tigris, the 13th Division found it necessary to send more troops—5th Wiltshire and half the 4th South Wales Borderers—into the city to deal with marauding Arabs and Kurds and generally to restore order.

The 1/5th Buffs of the 35th Brigade, experiencing a little difficulty in getting local boatmen, began to cross the Tigris in coracles (*gufar*) about 9.40 a.m., and one of their officers (Captain G. K. Harrison) at once hoisted the Union Jack on the citadel.* By 4.30 p.m., General Thomson, who had taken over control of the city, was able to relieve all the 13th Division piquets and send them to rejoin their division, which had, in the meantime, marched round the city to a position three miles north of it on the Tigris. Except for the marauding Arabs and Kurds, the local inhabitants were quiet and orderly, many of them greeting the British with enthusiasm; and there was little trouble experienced in restoring order, in which task General Thomson received much assistance from the American Consul, the Persian Consul-General, the Chief Rabbi and other local notables. Muhammad Amin pays a striking tribute to the discipline and conduct of the British army when he says that, though this was the thirtieth time that Baghdad had fallen to a conqueror, never before had the event passed off so quietly.

The Cavalry Division, with men and horses tired out, started northward from its bivouac at 6 a.m. Receiving General Maude's order to pursue beyond Kadhimain and hearing that our infantry were entering Baghdad, the 6th Cavalry Brigade and "S" Battery, R.H.A., being the freshest part of the division, were pushed forward and occupied Kadhimain, where they captured a hundred prisoners and four damaged aeroplanes. Patrols were sent northward from here, but they did not encounter any of the enemy.

The Naval Flotilla of seven gunboats, including the *Firefly* flying the White Ensign over the Turkish, left Bawi, accompanied by General Maude in the *P 53*, at 8.30 a.m., and at 3.30 p.m., reached Baghdad, where General Maude landed.

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* It was taken down from the citadel about three-quarters of an hour later and hoisted on the clock tower in the Turkish Headquarter Barracks as being a more prominent position. This flag is now in Canterbury Cathedral.

The naval gunboats continued upstream for about fourteen miles, capturing some barges and engaging some of the enemy rear guard. At Baghdad, General Maude learnt from his aeroplanes that they had seen a Turkish force, evidently their rear guard, about 4,000 strong, in position astride the railway some fifteen miles north of Baghdad, covering the entrainment of a similar sized force about five miles farther north.

The whole of the Tigris Army had been looking forward with eagerness to reaching Baghdad and during the last few days, when it had been in sight, there had been many instances in which officers had been obliged to restrain the ardour of their men, anxious to be among the first to enter it. Besides its appeal to many of them on historic, romantic or religious grounds, the city was a visible and tangible prize to recompense them for all their exertions and losses; it promised to be a welcome change from the desert; and it might possibly mean a rest under pleasanter conditions. It is sad to think, therefore, that many of those who took part in its capture laid down their lives in the subsequent operations before they could visit it. Military necessity, however, permitted no relaxation of the pursuit; and it was also imperative to occupy positions above Baghdad to prevent its surroundings being inundated.

Viewed from a distance, especially in the early morning or evening light, the city among the palm and orange groves with its shimmering blue and gold domes and minarets and its fine river foreground presents a fair picture; and this is particularly the case when approaching from the north. But to the British proximity spelt disenchantment. The outskirts were covered with corpses and bones of dead animals, and within the mud embankment that encircled it were crowded thousands of Mahommedan graves presenting a mournful and unkempt appearance; while, in the city itself, the miserable-looking and rather dilapidated houses of mud-brown brick, and the narrow filthy streets completed the disillusion. The one broad thoroughfare, named (in memory of his capture of Kut) Halil Pasha Street, was of recent construction, and was still fringed in places by partly demolished buildings. There were no sanitary nor scavenging arrangements, noxious smells abounded and hundreds of diseased and half-starved dogs roamed everywhere. These were the first impressions of the men who entered Baghdad on the 11th March, 1917; and, though on a closer acquaintance much of interest was found by those who had the time and inclination to look for it, great disappointment was the general feeling.

The shops in the bazaars were shut and empty. For a fortnight past the Turks had been requisitioning private merchandise and removing it by rail to Samarra. In addition, they had been taking away or destroying much military material; and in the few hours between their exit and our entry Arabs and Kurds had contrived considerable brigandage and destruction. But an immense amount of material of military value remained, though part of it had been damaged. Amongst other things we found guns, machine guns, rifles, ammunition, cylinders of lethal gas, machinery, railway workshops and material, rolling stock, ice and soda-water plant, pipes, pumps, cranes, winches, signal and telegraphic equipment and hospital accessories. Many antique cannon were found in the arsenal, as well as General Townshend's disabled guns, which had been taken by the Turks at the surrender of Kut. The Turks had made elaborate arrangements to blow up the citadel, and our troops found petrol-fed fires burning there, with trains ready laid to the ammunition stores; and it took our men all the afternoon and most of the ensuing night to extinguish the fires.

The great German wireless station, constructed for direct communication with Berlin and only just completed, had been blown up a few hours before our entry. Its last message to Berlin must have been a painful one for Germany, for, as Marshal von Hindenburg says in "Out of My Life," the loss of Baghdad killed many German dreams, besides being a sore point owing to the guarantee of territorial integrity which Germany had given Turkey.

While the British advance, narrated in this chapter, had been taking place, the commander of the Russian Caucasus Army had been doing what he could, in spite of the delayed arrival of reinforcements and the deep snow, to co-operate with General Maude. The passes into Mesopotamia to the northward of Bane were unlikely to open for another month and this made it impossible for Chernozuboff to strike directly at the Turkish communications by an advance on Mosul via Ruwandiz. It was hoped, however, by using other routes to the southward to threaten the Turkish retreat.

Four Russian columns advanced on a front of over 250 miles. The first (16 squadrons, 2 battalions and 8 guns), based on Saqqiz, moved on Bane, intending to advance towards Sulaimaniya and Kirkuk; but, finding the roads blocked by snow, turned southwards towards Penjwin, and on the 9th March reached a point about twenty-five miles south-south-west of

Saqqiz. The second (16 squadrons, $3\frac{3}{4}$ battalions and 12 guns), based on Bijar, after two days' fighting occupied Sehneh and pressed on southwards towards the Hamadan-Kermanshah road, sending a cavalry detachment to co-operate with their third column by cutting the Hamadan-Sehna road. The third column (29 squadrons, $7\frac{1}{2}$ battalions and 32 guns), based on Hamadan, after several fights with the Turkish rear guard, captured in succession the Asadabad pass, Kangavar, Sehna and Bisitun, which last place it occupied on the 8th March ; and continuing to advance it reached Kermanshah three days later. The fourth column, composed of two small detachments, moved from Daulatabad and Burujird on Kangavar.

The Russian intention was, if everything went well, that Baratoff, after effecting a junction north of Baghdad with the British, should advance on Kirkuk, while Chernozuboff moved towards Mosul. So far, however, conditions all along the Russian front had proved most difficult, owing to the deep snow and the breaking up of the roads by the Turks as they retired ; and inter-communication between the different columns had completely broken down.

One of the divisions of the Turkish XIII Corps had been reported to be retiring westward from Kermanshah, probably on Kifri, with the other division delaying the Russian advance in the Hamadan region ; the XVIII Corps was retiring north of Baghdad ; and the remainder of their Sixth Army was opposing Chernozuboff between Mosul and Bane.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

CONSOLIDATION OF THE BRITISH POSITION AT BAGHDAD: OPERATIONS FROM 12TH TO 31ST MARCH, 1917.

(MAPS 26, 27, 28 AND 29.)

OUR capture of Baghdad not only deprived the Turks of their best base for operations in Mesopotamia, but, by facilitating a Russian advance from Kermanshah which averted the danger of an enemy invasion of Persia, relieved us of immediate anxiety in respect to our Indian frontier.

Further good results quickly became apparent. In Lower Mesopotamia, Arab shaikhs who had hitherto held aloof or been aggressive came in, in increasing numbers, to offer allegiance; and raiding on our lines of communication decreased considerably. In South Persia, where there was still much unrest, especially among the nomadic tribes in the area westward of Shiraz between the Persian Gulf and Bakhtiari territory, the news exerted a very favourable influence and, on the arrival of Indian army reinforcements at Shiraz soon afterwards, facilitated the restoration of order. It also strengthened the Amir of Afghanistan in his desire to maintain strict neutrality, while it disheartened the anti-British elements among his subjects; and in India itself malcontents realised that the British *Raj* was still powerful enough to uphold its position in the East.

Everywhere in the British Empire and among our Allies our success aroused considerable enthusiasm; and General Maude, who was rewarded personally by promotion to Lieutenant-General, was the recipient of numerous messages, congratulating him and his force, from the King and his Government and from many leading men in the Empire and of the Allied Powers.

What action the enemy might take to try to retrieve the position was, of course, uncertain. Turkish reinforcements, variously reported at from one to three divisions, were said to be on their way to Mesopotamia; and during the latter half of March other Turkish divisions were reported to be moving from the Bulgarian front to Constantinople, whither European troops were also said to be proceeding to relieve Turkish troops despatched southwards. Their destination might be either their Caucasus, Mesopotamian or Syrian fronts. In regard to the last, the British Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force had been instructed in January that his primary mission after the occupation of Rafa would,

during the summer, be the defence of Egypt and preparation for an offensive campaign in Palestine during the autumn. After the first battle of Gaza on the 26th–27th March, however, and as a result of it and of General Maude's victories in Mesopotamia, he was told to develop his recent success to the fullest possible extent and to adopt a more offensive rôle in general.*

These latter instructions were rendered more important by the uncertainty which the Russian revolution had brought about in regard to the Russian ability to take the offensive in Armenia, Kurdistan and Mesopotamia. The extent to which they could succeed in this must affect appreciably the ability of the Turks to reinforce their Sixth Army for an offensive against General Maude. The Russian Caucasus Army was known to be operating under great difficulties owing to snow, imperfect communications and inadequate supply and transport arrangements; and the revolution, which commenced—primarily as a result of extreme dissatisfaction with the conduct by the Tsar's Government of the war—on the day after our entry into Baghdad, soon seemed likely to add to these difficulties.

The first reports from our Ambassador in Petrograd showed that the Russian people had displayed, in spite of suffering from shortage of food and misgovernment, great restraint and discipline in the opening movements of the revolution. But it soon became evident that a great internal struggle was in progress between the moderate elements, in favour of continuing the war unremittingly under a constitutional Government, and the Socialists and pro-German element who wished for peace and a republic. The local output of ammunition and other war material at once fell considerably and the troops in and around Petrograd were said to be out of hand to a great extent. By the end of March the unrest had spread to many of the internal military depots, but it was still uncertain what effect the revolution would have on the armies in the field. On the western and south-western fronts the revolution was then reported to have had little or no effect. But there were ominous reports of insubordination and desertion among the troops on the Russian northern and Caucasus fronts, aggravated probably in the latter case by sickness and privation. The Grand Duke Nicholas also handed over command of the Caucasus Army and went to Russian General Headquarters

* The first reports of the battle of Gaza seemed to indicate that it was a success.

with results that could not be foreseen. In any case, until the Provisional Government gained ascendancy over the Socialist element, the whole Russian situation gave great cause for anxiety.

British military activity in Mesopotamia beyond the limits of the Baghdad *vilayet* was not contemplated; but it was hoped that in the near future the Russians would reach Mosul, to which they were much nearer than the British. In this case General Maude would probably have to devote his attention mainly to the Euphrates line, down which the Turks might take the offensive if they could overcome its difficulties as a line of advance; and it might be possible to transfer part of Force 'D' for service elsewhere. A German diary captured at Baghdad gave us some valuable information about the Euphrates route, and showed that the Germans, who had started a shipbuilding yard at Jerablus,* were trying to improve the means of transport downstream by constructing motor-driven *shakturs*.† It confirmed our previous information that storms, winds and groundings considerably hampered navigation, and that though under very favourable circumstances the journey downstream from Jerablus to Falluja might be done in three weeks, the average time taken approximated to nearly double that period.

After their entry into Baghdad, the immediate objects of the British were to consolidate their position and to co-operate with the Russians in establishing themselves on the Tigris about Mosul.

Baghdad itself was a difficult position to hold as it was lacking in natural and artificial defences, and several main routes converged on it by which the enemy could advance and attack us. Moreover, in the vicinity to the north and north-west, military movement was much hampered by a network of canals and irrigation cuts, over which there were few bridges, and by the lack of good communications. Owing to the inaccuracy of our available maps, this fact was not, however, fully realised till it had been proved by actual experience. There was the danger that inundations from the Tigris and Euphrates, by converting the city into an island surrounded by some miles of water, might render it untenable, check or stop our further advance and give the enemy time to reinforce and reorganise; and the imminent approach of the

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* Where the Baghdad railway crosses the Euphrates north-east of Aleppo.

† Flat-bottomed boats or rafts of rough construction carrying about five tons.

flood season accentuated this danger.* The hot weather was not far off. The city and surrounding country were now without government or administration; the attitude of many of the inhabitants was uncertain; and the supply and maintenance arrangements for the force, now some five hundred miles from its sea base, had to be assured.

A variety of races, including most denominations of Christian, Jew and Moslem, were represented among the 150,000 or so inhabitants of the city, but the predominating race elsewhere in the country was Arab; and the British Government had decided that this fact must govern the organisation of the administration which was, for the time being until the war was over, to supplement the martial law necessary for the security of the occupying force. A proclamation, drawn up in London, which announced the wishes of the British Government as far as they could be defined before the final post-war settlement, was sent to General Maude for publication (see Appendix XXXVIII) and H.M. Government issued instructions that the existing administrative machinery was to be preserved as far as possible, substituting Arab for Turkish spirit and personnel, and that every effort should be made to induce local representative men to come forward and participate in the civil administration, British co-operation being limited as far as possible to advisory functions. As General Maude was still in chief political control of the country, this state of affairs necessarily added considerably to his responsibilities and work, even though most of it fell on the shoulders of Sir Percy Cox, his chief political officer.

The military and civil administration of the city and of the rest of the *vilayet* were carefully organised and their mutual relations regulated; strict policing being necessary, including for instance a house to house search for arms which produced hundreds of rifles and other weapons. Road communications all required immediate improvement and many bridges, including two across the Tigris near Baghdad,† had to be constructed.

Sanitation had to be taken in hand energetically, much work being necessary before the city was really fit for occupation. Hospital accommodation in the city for 7,000 sick and convalescent cases had to be arranged for and took time, as the

* Learning on the 24th March that the thaw had begun in the mountains, General Maude estimated that the floods at Baghdad would be setting in at their highest in the first week of April.

† One connecting the right bank portion of the city with the left bank and the other in the Karada bend, south of Baghdad.

larger buildings, practically all of which had been used by the Turks for this purpose, were indescribably dirty and verminous.* Medical plans for the future had to be thought out and arrangements made for the housing and comfort of the troops during the coming hot weather, which according to reports would be more severe even than near Kut. Various depots for men, animals and stores were required and sites for them carefully selected. The captured workshops and military material had to be examined and assessed, and the supply resources of the country had to be tapped. For this last purpose a Local Produce Directorate was organised under Colonel E. Dickson and found much to do. The resources of the country round Baghdad, Baquba and Diltawa were found to be much greater than had been anticipated. Fresh meat was abundant, vegetable gardens extended in many directions, and the plentiful supplies of forage and fuel lessened considerably our transport difficulties. In addition, we were soon able to draw from the rich districts on the Euphrates between Nasiriya and Falluja, and Baghdad became the advanced base of supply.

Railway policy was reviewed. It was impossible to commence a railway from Basra to Qurna till after the flood season. The Qurna-Amara metre-gauge conversion would be completed before the end of April, when a similar line from Kut to Baghdad, the most difficult stretch of the river to navigate during low-water, would be constructed. A line from Amara to Kut need not be undertaken as the river navigation between those places was not difficult ; and there was as yet no military necessity to consider an extension of the Nasiriya line.

Its reorganisation and development had enabled the line of communications to cope with the strain put on it by the rapidity of the recent advance. Great difficulties had been overcome during the past year by the services and departments under the control of the Inspector-General of Communications ; and it is appropriate here to recapitulate briefly some of the important works and undertakings which enabled our army to reach and hold Baghdad. Basra was now a great modern port. Many square miles of the water-logged flats in its vicinity had been reclaimed, and roads for wheeled traffic connected its various depots and hospitals, including one, built with metal brought from India, through the camp and depots a mile in rear of its six-mile river front. Steamers could now unload

* The Turks had removed most of their sick and wounded before our entry, leaving only about 600 of their worst cases.

alongside properly-equipped wharves served by railways; the port was lit by electricity; and its control, construction, pilot and harbour-master services were well organised. Similar improvements had been carried out at the different posts on the lines of communication, local and imported labour had been suitably organised in corps, and the marching road up the Tigris had been much improved.

The Inland Water Transport flotilla was by this time a large one and its efficiency had been increased by better organisation. Much also had been done to improve navigation. A river pilot service had been organised, the pilots working each on his own section of the river, and its work supplemented by a survey and buoyage system; river banks and flood embankments were kept repaired along some hundreds of miles of river; a dredger service was constantly maintained; and "The Narrows"* had been improved and lighted at difficult bends to allow of night traffic. A ship-building yard, repair shops, slipways and basins for steamers at Basra, with minor repair yards up country, had been constructed; skilled mechanics, many of them Chinese, had been brought in to put together a large number of craft brought out from England in sections; and innumerable piers had been erected at Basra and at all the main stations upstream, as also minor wharves, to facilitate quick loading and unloading. The railways, built to supplement the river transport, also enabled greater use to be made of available craft from India the draught of which was too deep for navigation of the shallower stretches of the river, as, by working in combination with the railway, craft could be grouped to run in the stretches most suitable for their draught.

Large hospitals and convalescent depots with piped water supply, electric power stations and ice factories had been constructed at Basra and Amara, with smaller hospitals at other stations. For the evacuation of casualties the Medical Service had its own motor launches and hospital river-steamers, as well as motor ambulance convoys and ambulance trains. The sanitary and bacteriological requirements of the force were dealt with by special organisations adequately equipped; and, amongst other measures, wide-spread anti-malarial operations were carried out and arrangements made for a constant supply of filtered and chlorinated water at every halting place between Basra and Baghdad. The scale of

* Twenty-eight miles of the Tigris between Ezra's Tomb and Qala Salih.

rations had been much improved and the force was in regular receipt of the comforts provided by ladies in all parts of the Empire.*

In the above summary, owing to considerations of space, much has been condensed. The inherent difficulties of campaigning in an undeveloped country like Mesopotamia, and the manner in which these difficulties had hampered our operations in 1915 and 1916 and caused great suffering to our men, have been alluded to in the two previous volumes of this history. Our omissions and mistakes had been many. But these, as far as was humanly possible, had now been rectified, and our force, properly equipped and fed, was at last able to do itself justice in battle without apprehension of disaster from purely administrative defects or fear of undue suffering by its wounded and sick.

On the 9th March, 1917, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff sent General Maude the following telegram :—

> "Grand Duke has informed me that Baratoff, who occupied Kangavar and Sehna† on the 5th March, will be instructed to press on to Khaniqin in order to get into touch with you. By my estimate Baratoff is not likely to reach Khaniqin till nearly the end of this month. Before then the 6th Turkish Division will have escaped if it continues to move on Kirkuk as appears probable ; but you might be able to cut off the retreat at least of a part of the 2nd Turkish Division‡ which is now in touch with Baratoff. If you can follow up your success by directly assisting Russians to establish themselves firmly on the Tigris, your mission of establishing British influence in the Baghdad *vilayet* will be much simplified. You will then only have to watch the Euphrates line, the capacity of which is much inferior. The situation when you enter Baghdad, particularly as regards supplies, must govern your future plans, but for full exploitation of your success it is important to operate with the Russians as far as possible. In order, therefore, that I may communicate with Grand Duke, keep me fully informed of your intentions."

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* With the comforts from India and in connection with the treatment of sick and wounded at Bombay, the name of Lady Willingdon, the wife of the Governor of Bombay, will always be gratefully associated by all ranks of Force 'D.'

† Sehneh, sixty miles north-westward of Sehna, had also been occupied and it is not quite clear which is here referred to. Sehna is twelve miles west of Kangavar.

‡ The 2nd and 6th Divisions formed the Turkish XIII Army Corps.

On the 11th General Maude telegraphed to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff that the time seemed ripe to push forward from Nasiriya and occupy Samawa, as this would add considerably to our influence on the Euphrates, place a rich centre in our hands and add to the discomfiture of Ajaimi and his following. A sufficient garrison would be left at Nasiriya to keep watch over the Shatra tribes, who were, however, unlikely to give trouble. But before carrying out this project General Maude asked for the sanction which he had previously undertaken to obtain.* The Chief of the Imperial General Staff replied on the 13th March that it appeared to him that the most important matter was for General Maude to exploit his success to the full and in the direction indicated in the Chief of the Imperial General Staff's telegram of the 9th. There was no objection to the occupation of Samawa, if it could be done, but it appeared probable that full exploitation of the Baghdad success would result in the situation on the Lower Euphrates settling itself. It was primarily a question, of which General Maude was the sole judge, whether some of the Nasiriya troops could not be put to better use in the Baghdad theatre and whether transport facilities then locked up in the Euphrates would not be of more value on the Tigris.

On the 14th March General Maude answered the Chief of the Imperial General Staff's telegram of the 9th March as follows :—

> "Delay in replying regretted, but change in situation has involved thought. Close co-operation with the Russians necessitates complex supply and transport problems, and I am anxious not to embark on undertakings which may prove impracticable on further consideration. To-day I am dealing with Turkish rear guard north of Baghdad, and there is also a hostile detachment, escaping up the Euphrates from Samawa, which I wish to intercept; supply and transport and water difficulties are, however, involved here. I hope, in spite of these, that developments may permit of my having a strong column ready to move on Khaniqin shortly. Both from supply aspect and to avoid premature excitement of Turkish suspicion, the move of this column must be accurately timed, and in consequence early and up-to-date information with regard to Baratoff's movements are essential for me in forming my plans. 6th Turkish Division may possibly be halted temporarily at Khaniqin, so as to cover withdrawal of 2nd Division now

* See page 51 *ante*.

opposed to Baratoff against stroke from Baghdad; but, provided our movements are well co-ordinated and synchronised, we might deal these two divisions a severe blow. This is all I can say meanwhile; but if I can be kept fully posted as to Baratoff's movements and the opposition he is meeting with, I shall be in a position to judge when the moment is ripe to move from here, granting that satisfactory adjustment of supply and transport situation can be arrived at."

To recapitulate the situation briefly. General Maude, after his capture of Baghdad, had from there to undertake military operations as soon as possible in several different directions, i.e., westward to the Euphrates, northward up both banks of the Tigris and in a north-easterly direction towards Khaniqin. The organisation of the necessary forces for these operations meant solving difficult supply and transport problems while his main line of communication was still suffering from the strain of his recent rapid advance; and he had also to take immediate measures to protect the Baghdad area from inundations and to gain and maintain control of the local population. The last object gave him least trouble, but he experienced considerable anxiety for some days in regard to the inundations.

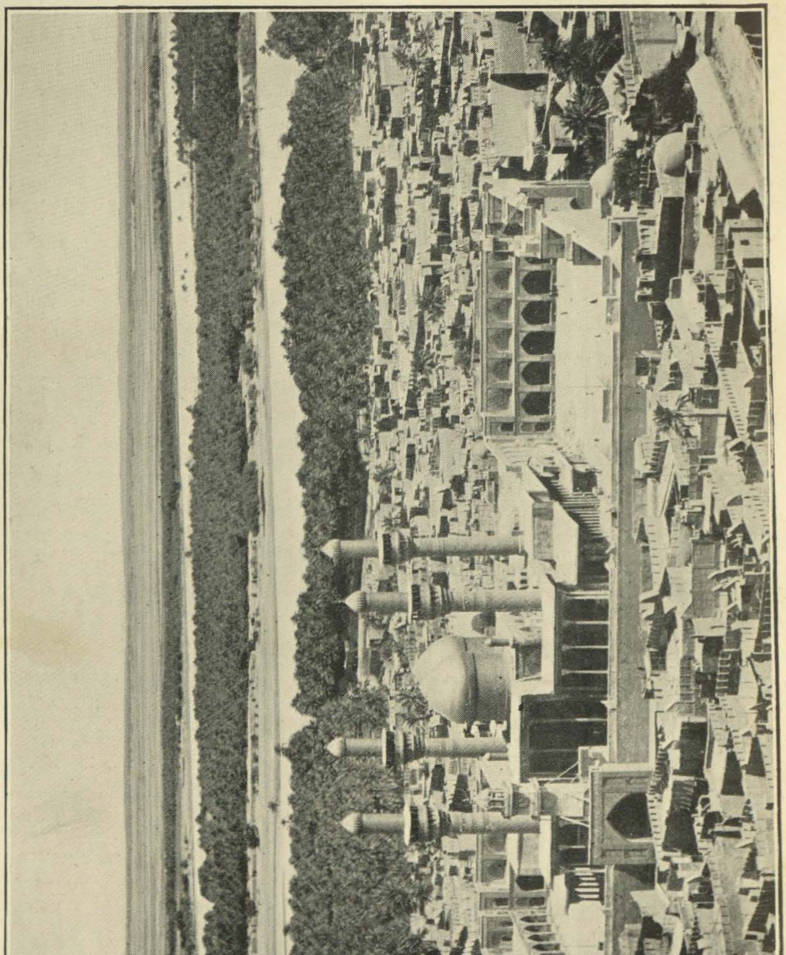
Before dealing in detail with the various military operations carried out by the end of the month, which included some hard fighting, it will make General Maude's general plan clearer to summarise briefly his dispositions during the first few days after the 11th March. The horses of the Cavalry Division were so worn out that they had to be given several days' complete rest. On the 12th, troops from the 13th Division began moving up the left bank of the Tigris to occupy posts controlling the flood embankment, and by the 14th their advanced brigade (40th) had occupied Kasirin, twenty-eight miles north of Baghdad, driving back a small force of hostile infantry. Our aeroplanes had located camps of about 4,000 Turkish troops each, taken to be their 51st and 52nd Divisions, about Hassaiwa and Mushahida on the Tigris right bank, with an entrenched position near Hassaiwa. The Turkish 14th Division was believed on the 12th to have retired in the Baquba direction, but was reported next day to have turned back across the Khalis canal to rejoin the remainder of its Corps, though remaining on the Tigris left bank. It took a little time to organise a force to push up the Tigris right bank against the main body of the enemy's XVIII Corps, but on the 13th General Maude

instructed General Cobbe to march that night with the Ist Corps (less 3rd Division) and attack the enemy rear guard at Hassaiwa next morning. On the 13th information was received that the small Turkish force from Samawa on the Euphrates had reached Musaiyib on the 11th on its way to Ramadi, where it expected to meet reinforcements from Jerablus; and on the same day General Maude heard from a reliable source that the Turks had ordered the cutting of the flood embankments of the Sakhlawiya canal near Falluja. This news was serious as, if true, the ensuing floods would endanger the safety of the Samarra railway and the right bank part of Baghdad city. But supply and transport difficulties prevented the despatch of a column to Falluja till the 18th March.

There was no definite news of the position of the 6th Division of the Turkish XIII Corps, but it had probably passed Khaniqin unless it was taking up a flank position to cover the retirement of the 2nd Division, which, as it had prevented the Russians from occupying Kermanshah till the 11th, could hardly reach Khaniqin before the 20th March. On the 12th General Maude instructed the IIIrd Corps, as soon as reconnaissance for water *en route* and arrangements for supplies had been made, to send a detachment of a battalion and such other units as might be necessary to occupy Baquba. A reconnaissance to opposite Baquba, carried out by armoured cars on the 12th, when shots were exchanged with a hostile infantry column on the further (i.e., left) bank of the Diyala, and an unsuccessful attempt to seize the bridge there (it had been removed) on the 14th by a small infantry detachment in motor lorries, preceded the movement of larger forces.

The scattered disposition of the enemy forces and the possibility that they might concentrate for action out of sight of our advanced troops rendered General Maude largely dependent on his aeroplanes for reliable and timely information. His air force was, however, still only a squadron strong. Owing to the hangars having to be left behind, its machines had been continually exposed to all the inclemencies of the weather and were consequently somewhat dilapidated; engine overhauls had not been possible as frequently as was desirable; transport difficulties, with the Air headquarters five hundred miles by river from the base, were greater than ever; and the problems of supply were many. Long distance flights on the three fronts —Euphrates, Tigris and Diyala—were necessary; and the only available maps, very inaccurate and frequently on a small scale, did not make these any easier. It was impossible to

To face page 261



Kadhimain.

meet all demands and at first effectual co-operation was very difficult, as detachments under junior officers were not always made the best use of by staff officers inexperienced in their capabilities. But the airmen rose well to the occasion and did excellent work. A flight was sent on the 19th March to work on the Diyala front, another went up the Tigris and the third (of Martinsydes) remained at Baghdad for General Headquarters long distance work in any direction.

To turn now to the details of operations on the three fronts. In his operation order of the 13th March, General Maude stated that it was probable that the enemy force reported at Hassaiwa and Mushahida was being gradually evacuated from Mushahida by rail. (See Map 27.) General Cobbe with the Ist Corps—less 3rd Division—was to march that night so as to reach by daybreak on the 14th the vicinity of Hassaiwa, where the naval gunboats, already in that neighbourhood, would co-operate with his attack on the enemy.

General Cobbe's column consisted of two squadrons 32nd Lancers (Corps Cavalry), the 7th Division and two additional howitzer batteries (B/69th and 524th) giving him a total of 34 guns and 12 howitzers. After handing over the protection of Baghdad on the Tigris right bank to the 6th Cavalry Brigade and the 3rd Division, his column started from a mile south of Kadhimain. The advanced guard, composed of the 28th Infantry Brigade with a sapper company and a company of pioneers, started at 10.30 p.m. with orders to take up a covering position at Bait Nawab* and send forward patrols at 4 a.m. on the 14th to locate the enemy's position and reconnoitre the approaches to it; and at 6 a.m., it was to resume the advance. The main body, starting at 11.30 p.m., was to form up on arrival at Bait Nawab with two infantry brigades west of the railway.

The night march was uneventful. The road, which had been reconnoitred previously for about five miles north of Kadhimain, bent from that point more to the westward than was shown on the map; but as it ran close to and parallel with the railway there could be no mistake. At 3.30 a.m. the cavalry moved out and pushed ahead of the advanced guard to reconnoitre the enemy position, reported the previous day by aeroplanes as extending from the Tigris bend north of Hassaiwa westward to the railway; and at dawn† the advanced guard halted, the

* According to the current map this was about nine miles from Kadhimain.
† Sunrise was about 6.20 a.m.

distance traversed warranting its commander's belief that he had reached, if not passed, Bait Nawab. Its patrols could find no signs of the enemy's position; but as the actual distance here between the Tigris and the railway was much greater than was shown on the map, it seemed probable that the enemy's position was farther off than had been expected. At 7 a.m., General Cobbe cancelled his former order and instructed the advanced guard, now reinforced by the 9th Brigade, R.F.A., and a howitzer battery, to resume the advance so as to get into close contact with the enemy and discover his dispositions, the cavalry being sent to locate his right flank and cover the left of our infantry. The main body, after halting for an hour, was to advance on a broad front.

At 8 a.m., information was received from the 32nd Lancers that the enemy was holding a position extending from the river to the railway, apparently about three miles south of Mushahida, but his right flank had not been located. Other reports of this position could not be reconciled with the map, on which it was found that the railway was shown three miles farther east than it actually was; and a rough sketch drawn about 9 a.m. by pilots and observers of two aeroplanes led to the belief that the position was much nearer than was really the case. In the meantime, the 32nd Lancers, having drawn the enemy's fire and obtained a rough idea of his line, moved west of the railway; and at 9.35 a.m. General Cobbe received a report from them saying that the enemy's right flank was apparently on high ground about three miles south-west of Mushahida railway station and half a mile west of the railway, and that an enemy armoured train appeared to be in the station. Ten minutes later, orders were issued to the advanced guard commander not to commit his troops to a serious attack but to confine himself to reconnaissance. This order does not seem to have reached the advanced guard commander till nearly three quarters of an hour later, when it caused him to halt his men, as they were already under accurate, though not heavy, enemy shell fire. For some little time past in its advance over the open plain the advanced guard had encountered every half mile or so low lines of sandhills and patches of broken ground, running roughly at right angles to its line of advance, and in the mirage this succession of ridges rendered observation very difficult.

Although the general line of the enemy's position had been located, its extent, the exceptionally strong mirage and other difficulties affecting accurate observation so delayed further

reconnaissance that it was not till noon that General Cobbe obtained sufficient information on which to form a plan of attack.* The enemy's line, lying about three and a half miles south of Mushahida station, extended westward from the Tigris for about seven miles, its extreme right flank resting on a conical mound, subsequently known as Bhopal Hill. The enemy's main strength lay apparently between two mounds, X (see Map 27) and Tel Gosh, where there was a triple line of interrupted trenches commanding a very good field of fire across the flat and open plain. Westward of X to and across the railway there was a scattered line of trenches, mainly lying along the sandhills and lines of mounds ; while between Tel Gosh and the Tigris was a line of interrupted trenches, canals and irrigation cuts leading to the villages on the river bank. Behind the line, the sand ridges and broken ground gave the enemy good cover for reserves and manœuvre. It had also been reported that the Turks were holding Mushahida fort and that their main body was at the railway station.

From observation during and after the action it appears that the Turks did not anticipate, probably owing to the difficulty of getting water so far from the river,† that the British would attempt a serious movement against or round their extreme right flank ; though they had prepared trenches a little westward of X, sited to take in flank any attempt to turn that point. They were found to have marked out the whole line apparently with the intention of completing it to a strong position ; though this idea was not altogether confirmed by the subsequent capture of a copy of an order issued by the Turkish 52nd Division commander on the 12th March, which gave the Turkish intentions and dispositions. This stated that the XVIII Corps had halted to cover the withdrawal of ammunition, stores, etc., and assist the retirement from Khaniqin of the XIII Corps ; but it was intended only to delay the British advance and not to fight a decisive action. The 52nd Division held the right section of the Turkish line ; three battalions 43rd Regiment with four machine guns and a battery of artillery being west of the railway, the 40th Regiment and reserves between the railway and the road

* General Maude, at Baghdad, who was trying to keep in touch with the operation by wireless and had already received three reports that morning, evidently did not realise these difficulties, as at 11.30 a.m. he sent General Cobbe a message deprecating further delay in attacking.

† The Turks themselves could make arrangements for supply of water by train.

immediately east of it, and the 37th Regiment with at least nine machine guns and two batteries of artillery to the east of this road. The 51st Division held the left section of the line to the Tigris; and the 14th Division was somewhere east of the river.

At 12.7 p.m., General Cobbe gave his orders verbally to the 7th Division commander, confirming them soon afterwards in writing. The attack was to be made along the railway line, one infantry brigade on each side of it with the third brigade in support and the Corps Cavalry co-operating on the left. By a successful attack towards the railway station, the enemy's rail-head where his reserves were reported to be, General Cobbe hoped to cause the enemy to evacuate his strongly entrenched left.

General Fane, commanding 7th Division, issued his orders at 12.30 p.m. The 21st Brigade (only three battalions strong), supported by two battalions 19th Brigade, was to cross the railway by moving under culverts and advance on a 400-yard frontage with its right on the railway and with the two supporting battalions in echelon to the left rear. The 56th Brigade, R.F.A., was to support this advance by a rolling barrage two hundred yards in front of the infantry on both sides of the railway; and two howitzer batteries were to fire on the sandhills east of the railway. The 28th Brigade, with which were the 9th Brigade, R.F.A., and a howitzer battery, was to advance on the east of the railway when the leading line of the 21st Brigade came up level with it; and the 19th Brigade, less two battalions, would form Divisional Reserve east of the railway.

The crossing of the railway line under culverts, ordered so as to escape the enemy's notice, took a considerable time; and it was not till 3.20 p.m., that the 21st Brigade began its advance in two lines. The 2nd Black Watch and 1/8th Gurkhas formed the first line, with a section 135th Machine Gun Company in rear of the Black Watch; and the 9th Bhopal Infantry, in second line, were echeloned to the left rear of the Gurkhas. In echelon again to the left rear of the Bhopal Infantry were the two battalions 19th Brigade, 1st Seaforth Highlanders and 28th Punjabis, with the remainder of the machine gun company between the Punjabis and the railway. The enemy's main line of resistance along a ridge between the railway and Bhopal Hill was 2,000 to 2,500 yards distant; and about 4 p.m., the leading line of the Black Watch came abreast of the 28th Brigade and began to encounter hostile shell fire.

Both brigades continued the advance. The 28th Brigade encountered little direct opposition, though it came under accurate enfilade gun fire from its right front; but the 21st Brigade, subjected to considerable enfilade rifle and machine gun fire from its left front, was forced to extend its line; and although the 32nd Lancers, wide on the left, co-operated well with rifle and machine gun fire, the progress of the left of the line was checked. About 5 p.m. the two Black Watch companies on the right by a fine charge cleared the enemy from the advanced trenches of his main position on the ridge near the railway; and the 56th Rifles (28th Brigade) across the railway pushed up level with them and then swung round to line the railway embankment facing west. This movement was effective. Enfilade fire caused the Turks to evacuate their main trenches on the ridge for about four hundred yards from the railway and, by the casualties it inflicted among the enemy on the eastern slopes of Bhopal Hill, relieved somewhat the situation of the two left companies of the Black Watch and of the 1/8th Gurkhas. Soon after 5 p.m., the Bhopal Infantry came up on the left of the Gurkhas, who were echeloned some little distance to the left rear of the two left companies of the Black Watch; but the reinforced line was still unable to capture Bhopal Hill, to which the Turks clung tenaciously. The British artillery was ordered forward to fire at closer and more effective ranges and the British infantry made arrangements for another assault by pushing forward small parties with Lewis guns up covered approaches to points whence to enfilade the enemy's line. About 6.30 p.m., the artillery opened an intense bombardment from their new positions; and a little later Bhopal Hill was captured by a fine assault, led by the two left companies of the Black Watch and followed at once by the 1/8th Gurkhas and 9th Bhopal Infantry. At the same time the two right companies of the Black Watch also charged, capturing the remainder of the enemy's main position eastward of Bhopal Hill.

In the meantime, at 6.10 p.m., General Fane had issued an order to the 21st and 28th Brigades to push on as fast as possible and capture Mushahida railway station; but the 28th Brigade reported that it could not advance till Bhopal Hill had been taken, as this hill dominated the whole position. As dusk fell this brigade lessened its extended front, and, after the capture of Bhopal Hill, pushed patrols towards the railway station. These patrols, however, made little progress, as officers and men were all very tired and suffering from

thirst; and the difficulty of groping through the broken country in front of them in the dark was not lessened by the confusion caused by their recent advance. The same order to advance did not reach Colonel A. G. Wauchope of the Black Watch till just after Bhopal Hill had been captured;* and on collecting his battalion he found that casualties had been very heavy and that his men had little ammunition left for their Lewis guns and less than 100 rounds per rifle. His men also were very tired and suffering from thirst;† but their spirit was high and in spite of the difficulties and risks of a further advance in the dark across the broken country in front, Colonel Wauchope decided to attempt it. Two companies of the Seaforth Highlanders ordered forward from the reserve soon after 5 p.m. now came up and joined him, but the 56th Rifles of the 28th Brigade told him that they had orders not to make any further advance.

The Bhopal Infantry were left to hold Bhopal Hill and Colonel Wauchope advanced with his own battalion, the 1/8th Gurkhas‡ and the Seaforth companies. No opposition was encountered, though progress was necessarily slow, until the vicinity of the railway station was reached about 11.30 p.m., when a train was heard leaving the station. The force then deployed and charged, putting the few remaining enemy to flight and taking a few prisoners. By daybreak on the 15th March the whole of the 28th Brigade also had reached the vicinity of the station.

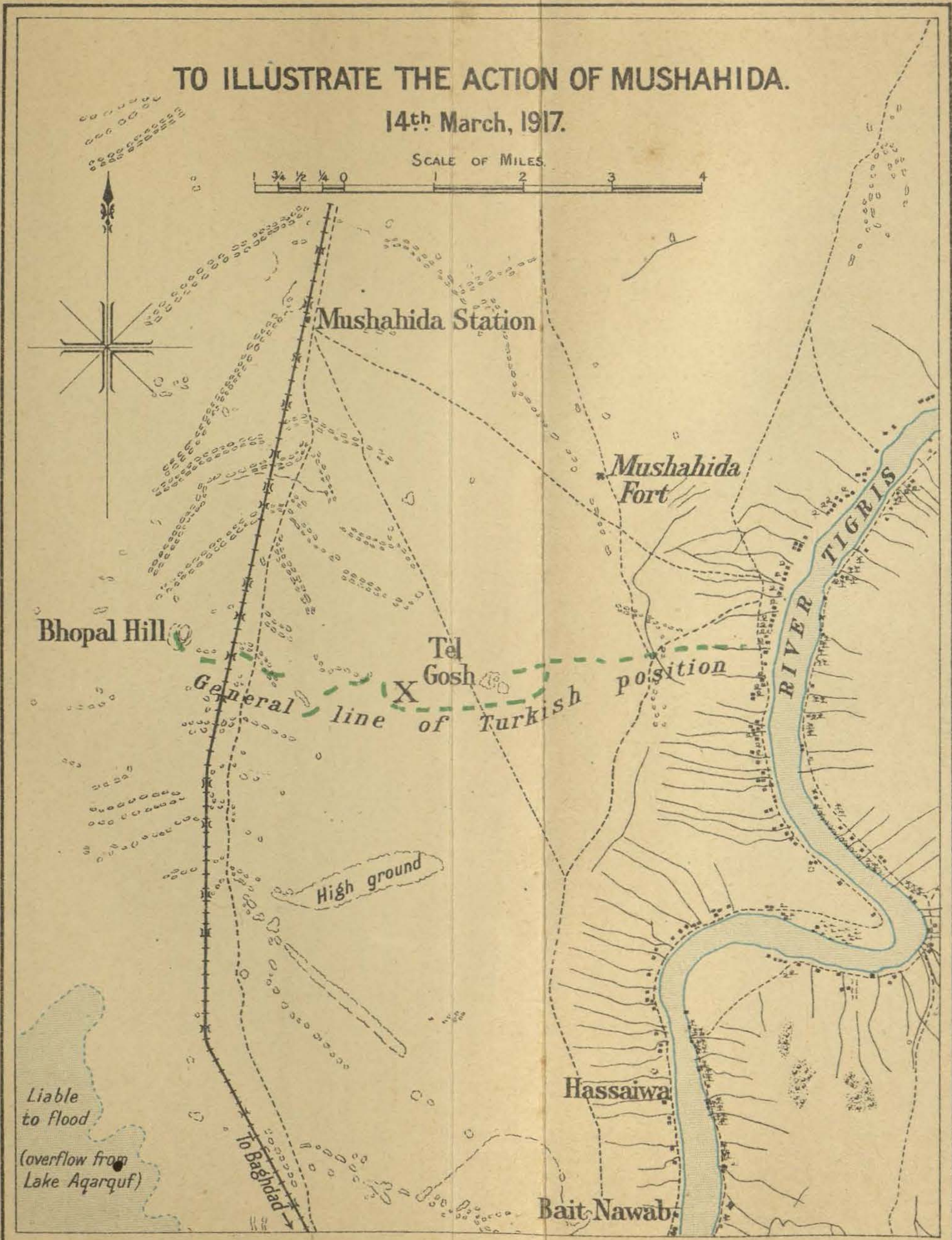
In his report on this operation General Cobbe described the endurance and determination of officers and men, who had marched and fought practically continuously for over twenty-four hours, as being above praise. Their casualties had totalled 518, of which 398 were in the 21st Brigade. The Black Watch, whose gallantry and endurance under the fine leadership of its commanding officer and of its company and platoon commanders had been especially marked, contributed 230, including 10 officers, or 43 per cent. of its strength; the 1/8th Gurkhas and 9th Bhopal Infantry each incurred over 70 casualties; and the losses in the 56th Rifles (28th Brigade) were 84 out of a strength of 369. The Turks, whose strength was estimated by our aeroplanes at not less than 5,000 rifles and 24 guns, were

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* Communication seems to have suffered after the Brigade Signalling Officer was killed between 5 and 6 p.m.

† Waterbottles had been filled on the evening of the 13th and enough water was carried on mules to refill the bottles once on the 14th, but no more water was available till the morning of the 15th March.

‡ The Gurkhas had only one British officer (Captain Bernard) left and Colonel Wauchope lent an officer and four men to assist him.



PREPARED IN THE HISTORICAL SECTION OF THE COMMITTEE OF IMPERIAL DEFENCE

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believed to have suffered 800 to 1,000 casualties, including over fifty prisoners remaining in our hands. During the fighting our naval gunboats had co-operated by shelling the enemy cavalry and reserves near Mushahida Fort.

In the early hours of the 15th March General Cobbe telegraphed to General Maude that a cavalry brigade with horse artillery might find good opportunities for exploiting the success gained. But General Maude replied that there was no indication that the enemy in front of General Cobbe was broken and that the cavalry horses required a rest. At dawn General Cobbe sent out his Corps Cavalry north-eastward to the Tigris and then northward, followed by two battalions 19th Brigade with artillery, but the enemy had slipped away and eluded pursuit. Our patrols reaching the railway station five miles north of Mushahida only encountered a few Turkish cavalry patrols and some mounted Arabs; but from the abandoned ammunition, equipment, etc., that they found it was clear that the enemy had retired in haste. General Maude was not prepared, however, to follow the enemy farther northward and sent General Cobbe orders to rest his men, clear the battlefield and, after leaving such troops as he deemed necessary to ensure the security of the embankment on the Tigris right bank, withdraw with the remainder to Baghdad.

Evacuation of the wounded from Hassaiwa* in the medical ships and launches was somewhat delayed by a strong gale and continuous dust-storms on the 15th and this also hampered air reconnaissance; but next day our aeroplanes reported Turkish stragglers to the northward over a depth of twenty miles above a point twenty-five miles from Mushahida. On the 17th March, leaving an infantry brigade (21st), a battery of artillery and a company of sappers to safeguard the river embankments, the force returned to Baghdad.

On the 11th March General Maude had issued an order for the Ist Corps to push forward next day a brigade group to Nukhta on the road to Falluja; but on the morning of the 12th this order was cancelled, and instructions issued to send a party there on the 13th to ascertain if water was obtainable in sufficient quantities. Information on the 13th showed that the Turkish force from the Euphrates had probably already reached Falluja and that the Turks meant to cut the flood embankments at the mouth of the Sakhlawiya canal; and by the evening

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* The Turks had removed all the rolling stock of the Baghdad-Samarra railway, whose gauge was 4 feet 8½ in.

reports had been received that there was only just sufficient water at Nukhta for about a brigade. Supply and transport difficulties would not, however, admit of the despatch of a column to Falluja in addition to the force moving to attack the Turks at Mushahida. On the 14th March aeroplanes reported that there were only two small enemy steamers within ten miles of Falluja and that no more than about 200 enemy troops had been seen in that neighbourhood; and on the 16th, when it seemed clear that few, if any, Turks were within fifty miles of Baghdad on the Tigris and that its embankments had been secured for thirty miles north of Baghdad, General Maude issued orders for the Ist Corps to despatch a brigade group to Falluja on the 18th, to hold that place and protect the Sakhlawiya embankment. On the morning of the 17th, owing to information that the Turkish force in the vicinity of Falluja might possibly amount to 2,000 cavalry and infantry with three guns, General Cobbe was instructed to send two howitzers with the Falluja column in addition to the 18-pounder battery previously ordered. By the evening of the 17th news that flood water from Lake Aqarquf was within four and a half miles of Kadhimain and was steadily advancing indicated that the Turks had cut the Sakhlawiya embankment. Steps had already been taken, however, to secure protection against such floods; and the Ist Corps, assisted by technical troops and local labour, strengthened a line extending from the Tigris above Kadhimain along the railway embankment and the Mahsudiya canal.

Early on the 18th March a column under Brigadier-General S. R. Davidson, consisting of a squadron 32nd Lancers, 66th Field Battery, a section 524th Howitzer Battery, 21st Company Sappers and Miners, 7th Infantry Brigade and a company 34th Sikh Pioneers, with a pack wireless set and medical and supply units, started for Nukhta. An advanced party, starting three hours ahead of the column to improve the water supply, exchanged a few shots with a Turkish patrol near Nukhta. But otherwise no opposition was encountered; and ample good water was obtained from an irrigation canal recently opened by the Arabs. Next morning the advance was resumed, and about four miles east of Falluja the 32nd Lancers gained contact with some enemy mounted troops, who fell back before our advance.

Though reconnaissance indicated that the enemy, whose strength was estimated at about a brigade, had trenches covering Falluja, he made no attempt to stand; and at 12.15 p.m., a quarter of an hour after our attack started, the

cessation of firing and smoke rising from Falluja showed that the enemy was retiring. Sending his cavalry ahead to secure the Sakhlawiya canal, General Davidson pushed on with the rest of his force and entered Falluja at 3.15 p.m., in time to prevent the whole of the bridge over the Euphrates being burnt and to fire, at about 1,200 yards range, on a considerable body of the enemy retiring up the right bank. The cavalry, reaching the Sakhlawiya sluice gates about 5 p.m., received news that enemy guns were in position on the river bank a little westward and that a Turkish gunboat was coming upstream towing a coracle full of Turks. Thinking to capture this, two troops of cavalry took up a position on the river bank and opened fire with their rifles at a range of 150 yards, to which the gunboat replied with shrapnel. Finding his position untenable, the cavalry commander decided to withdraw; but he was at once attacked by Arabs and only managed to extricate his squadron with difficulty at the cost of 25 casualties. The main column had incurred no casualties and had captured at Falluja, besides thirteen prisoners, a steam barge, a damaged launch and a considerable quantity of supplies.

Next morning (20th) the mouth of the Sakhlawiya canal was occupied without opposition by a detachment; but the breach in the embankment, said to have been made by the Turks a fortnight earlier, was too extensive to be repaired. This detachment remained in occupation, while the bulk of the column held Falluja and a bridge-head on the right bank of the river.

To turn now to the Diyala front. Four armoured cars of the 13th Light Armoured Motor Battery, sent by the IIIrd Corps on the 12th March up the right bank of the Diyala to reconnoitre the route to Baquba, arrived opposite that place at 5.15 p.m. and exchanged shots with a column of hostile infantry across the river before returning to Baghdad. On the 13th General Maude learnt that the Russian force under Chernozuboff moving on Bane and Penjwin could only make slow progress owing to the snow and that Baratoff's main force, opposed by the Turkish 2nd Division and a cavalry brigade, was nearing Bisitun on the 8th; and from this information General Maude concluded that this 2nd Division, whose strength was estimated at 4,500 rifles and 34 guns with some 1,500 irregulars attached to it, might reach Khaniqin on the 20th March. The Turkish 6th Division, with an estimated strength of 4,000 to 5,000 rifles and 12 guns, had probably

passed Khaniqin if it had not taken up a flank position to cover the retirement of the 2nd Division ; but there was no definite news regarding it.

On the 14th March the IIIrd Corps sent a detachment of 240 rifles 67th Punjabis and a section 13th Company Sappers and Miners in motor lorries, escorted by four armoured cars, to seize the bridge at Baquba and grain reported to be stored there. On arrival opposite Baquba, however, at 3.45 p.m. it was found that the bridge had been removed and, although no enemy troops were encountered, Arabs reported that there was a force of 1,500 Turkish rifles on the opposite side of the river. That day information was received that there were five Turkish infantry battalions at Mansuriya.

Permission was received that day for General Maude to communicate direct with Colonel Rowlandson, the British *liaison* officer with General Baratoff. Owing, however, to the difficulties with which Baratoff's force was faced in maintaining communication, this permission proved to be of little practical value. On the 14th also, Colonel Wavell, the British *liaison* officer with the headquarters of the Russian Caucasus Army, telegraphed to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff that the Grand Duke Nicholas and his Chief of Staff seemed to be whole-hearted in their determination to reach, if possible, Mosul and the line Bitlis-Sairt and to bring the Mesopotamian and Persian operations to a final and decisive result. Baratoff and Chernozuboff had received orders to press the enemy as rapidly as possible, but it seemed doubtful if operations would be possible towards Ruwandiz, Mosul and Bitlis much before the end of April owing to the snow. The capacity of the Russian communications also seemed doubtful ; and in the next few days Colonel Wavell's telegrams emphasised the Russian communication difficulties and showed that their Staff were much preoccupied with the internal situation and, although there were no signs of immediate trouble, were anxious regarding the attitude of their rank and file. Whether General Maude appreciated fully the extent and effect of the Russian communication difficulties is uncertain ; and he does not appear to have been informed for some weeks of the doubts exercising the minds of our own authorities in regard to the possibility that the revolution might affect the fighting capacity of the Russian army.*

* This was probably due to the fact that the whole situation was so uncertain.

On the 15th March, the remainder of the 67th Punjabis proceeded in motor lorries, while a squadron Corps Cavalry and a section 44th Field Battery marched by road, to join the Baquba detachment, which was shelled during the day by some hostile guns north-east of Baquba. In an operation order issued by General Maude that evening, it was stated that the enemy detachment near Baquba might be a flank guard detached from Khaniqin; and, in view of possible imminent operations by a portion of the Ist Corps in that direction, the IIIrd Corps was to arrange to occupy Baquba and bridge the Diyala there with the least possible delay. For this purpose, if required, a column from the Ist Corps under General Edwardes,* then on the Tigris left bank near Baghdad, was placed at the disposal of the IIIrd Corps.

On the 15th the Chief of the Imperial General Staff telegraphed that, although the advantages of co-operating with the Russians might be considerable, he did not wish General Maude to take undesirable risks to do so; and an advance on Khaniqin should be attempted only in adequate force and when the British position at Baghdad and the supply situation were assured. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff left the decision to General Maude, to whom he would send all information regarding the Russian situation as received. He would also keep the Grand Duke Nicholas informed of General Maude's situation.

In accordance with orders from the IIIrd Corps to seize Baquba and construct a bridge there, General Edwardes marched off on the 16th March and reached the neighbourhood of Baquba next day. As the available maps of the area were known to be inaccurate and our knowledge of the local topography was meagre, considerable reconnaissance was necessary. The Diyala near Baquba was nowhere less than one hundred yards wide; and although the country on the western, or right, bank was bare and open, on the left bank it was highly cultivated by irrigation, being covered for about four miles on each side of Baquba, a considerable town, with date groves, fruit gardens and thick undergrowth. These trees and undergrowth made it difficult to estimate the enemy's numbers, although from the firing these did not seem to be large; and General Edwardes decided to make a feint crossing some three miles above Baquba while ferrying over two battalions at night

* 8th Infantry Brigade (less one and a half battalions); 20th Company, Sappers and Miners (less one section); 34th Pioneers (less one company); Detachment No. 2 Bridging Train; and 215th Brigade, R.F.A. (less two batteries).

below the village of Buhriz, four miles south of Baquba. The operation was completely successful; Buhriz was rushed early in the 18th, when its surprised garrison fled precipitately; soon afterwards Baquba was occupied without opposition, its garrison having withdrawn; and by nightfall a bridge over the river had been completed. The Turkish force which had withdrawn was reported to be a detachment from the 14th Division sent to cover the concentration at or near Khaniqin of the XIII Corps; and there were Turkish troops reported to the north-east of Diltawa, who were possibly part of the 14th Division.

On the 16th March, General Maude issued orders for an advance from Baquba towards Khaniqin of a force under the command of General Keary (3rd Division), which, including the troops under General Edwardes, consisted of :—7th Cavalry Brigade (less 13th Hussars), 8th and 9th Infantry Brigades, 4th Brigade, R.F.A. (less one battery), 215th Brigade, R.F.A. (less one battery), D/69th Howitzer Battery, R.F.A.,* 18th and 20th Companies, Sappers and Miners, 34th Sikh Pioneers (less one company), ammunition column, wagon wireless set and medical and supply units.

In special instructions to General Keary, issued on the 18th March, it was stated that the Turkish 2nd and 6th Divisions, the latter leading, were retreating from Kermanshah, via Khaniqin, pursued by the Russians. Some hostile troops were reported to be crossing the Diyala about Qizil Ribat and others had recently been located near Diltawa. The total maximum strength of these two divisions was estimated at 800 sabres, 9,000 rifles and 50 guns, while the Russians under Baratoff numbered approximately 6,300 sabres, 15,000 rifles and 48 guns. General Keary was to manœuvre so as to impede the Turkish retreat, cut off any detachments or formations possible and generally assist the Russian pursuit. After concentrating at Baquba, he was to push forward advanced troops to Shahraban, gradually closing up there with his whole force. Accurate synchronisation of his movements with those of Baratoff would be necessary, and any obtainable information of the Russian movements would be sent him from time to time. Till further orders he was not to advance beyond Shahraban, but when he did so he must act vigorously and energetically so as to deal decisively with an enemy whose *moral* was failing. One hundred and fifty Ford vans would carry supplies for his

* i.e., a total of 20 guns and 4 howitzers.

force, refilling at Baquba, but he was to depend on local resources for fresh meat, grain, fodder and fuel.*

During the 19th March, General Keary received information from General Maude that at 8.30 a.m. that day our airmen had seen 500 Turks leaving Shahraban towards Baquba and 1,500 more Turks approaching Shahraban from the Qizil Ribat direction. These were possibly part of the Turkish 6th Division moving to seize Baquba. General Keary was instructed to conceal his strength, draw the Turks on and at a favourable opportunity deal vigorously with them. His patrols should get into early touch with them and if they showed no inclination to come on he should attack them. He must use his cavalry, however, with discretion, as their horses had recently had heavy work.

Having concentrated his force at Baquba by nightfall on the 19th March, General Keary sent the 7th Cavalry Brigade early on the 20th to reconnoitre towards Shahraban. But, in order to save the horses, its main body was not to go beyond Abu Jisra; and it was followed by the 8th Infantry Brigade with the 215th Brigade, R.F.A., (eight guns) with orders to take up a position within ten miles of Baquba to the north-east. The cavalry reached Abu Jisra without opposition, but their patrols located some enemy near Jalali, and General Keary decided to concentrate his advanced troops that evening at Abu Jisra followed by the rest of his force next day. General Maude's information that day (20th) was that the whole of the Turkish 2nd Division with attached irregulars and a cavalry brigade had been engaged on the 11th near Kermanshah with Baratoff's force, and that the Russians had reached Karind and were advancing from there on the 18th. From this it was estimated that the last of the Turkish 2nd Division would reach Khaniqin about the 23rd, and there was reason to believe that it was likely to turn off the main road south of Khaniqin and head directly for Kifri.†

On the morning of the 21st March the 7th Cavalry Brigade, supported by two infantry battalions and a field battery, pushing forward with instructions to locate and hold the enemy, was stopped by finding the Jalali bridge over the forty-feet wide Mahrut canal broken. (See Map 28.) The country near

* The Diyala, owing to its many bends, narrowness and shallow depth was only navigable by small steamers or launches, up to thirty feet long and with a draught of three feet.

† It was reported that the Diyala could be bridged anywhere and that the intervening country was passable for all arms.

the bridge had also been inundated; a mixed force of the enemy, with at least five guns, was holding Shahraban; and our several reconnaissances failed to find any other place by which they could cross the canal. An alternative to bridging the canal under fire was to cross the Diyala and move up its right bank; but this would require more bridging material than was available. General Keary sent back for more bridging material and at the same time made preparations to bridge the canal. During the morning he heard from General Maude that aeroplanes reported that the enemy from Khaniqin were crossing the Diyala gradually about Lambarak, apparently to get on to the Delli Abbas–Kifri road so as to continue their retreat on Kirkuk.* General Maude continued:—

> "You should get in touch with enemy and act vigorously so as to pin him to his ground. If too strong for you to attack pending arrival of Russians at Khaniqin about 24th, you should entrench position threatening his crossing over Diyala so that you can readily fall on him when Russians come up, as he then must necessarily weaken his front gradually to cross Diyala and continue his retreat. Destruction of his bridge over Diyala if practicable would of course have excellent effect. Do not get your troops too much strung out in moving on Shahraban, as latter place may be strongly held."

The information of the enemy dispositions given in General Maude's operation order of that evening was as follows:—

Near Qizil Ribat:—200 sabres, 2,700 rifles, 20 guns (6th Turkish Division).

At Delli Abbas, but moving northward:—200 sabres, 1,000 rifles, 6 guns (14th Turkish Division).

Near Shahraban:—40 sabres, 2,100 rifles, 4 guns (6th and 14th Turkish Divisions).

Line of Adhaim river with detachment Tigris right bank:—500 sabres, 5,000 rifles, 24 guns (51st and 52nd Turkish Divisions).

Euphrates near Ramadi, but moving westward:—500 sabres, 3,000 rifles, 22 guns.

By nightfall on the 21st, the 7th Cavalry Brigade, 8th Infantry Brigade and all the artillery, sappers and pioneers of General Keary's force had reached the vicinity of Jalali, the balance remaining at Abu Jisra. During the ensuing night, after a covering party of two companies 47th Sikhs had been

* As will be seen from the subsequent narrative, the Turks here were only sending supplies across the river.

ferried across in pontoons, a trestle bridge was constructed across the canal about three hundred yards north of Jalali.

On the 22nd March, an aeroplane reconnaissance to beyond Qasr-i-Shirin saw no traces of the Russians, though it had been anticipated that they would arrive near Khaniqin on the 24th. General Maude heard on the 22nd from the Chief of the Imperial General Staff that a telegram from General Maude to General Baratoff* sent the previous day via London had been forwarded, but that communication with the latter was slow and that snow was certainly hindering his advance. Moreover, he might be checked at the Pai Taq pass. Further news received from London that day showed that a rapid advance on the part of the Russians was also rendered difficult by the fact that the Turks had cleared the country of all supplies, animals and inhabitants. On the 22nd also, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, in answer to a telegram from General Maude on the subject, directed the latter to arrange with the Russian commanders spheres of respective military action, which should be dictated by military exigencies only and would have no relation to the spheres of political influence already agreed upon by the Governments of Great Britain, France and Russia.

Reconnaissance by General Keary's force during the 22nd showed the Turks to be holding an entrenched line west of Shahraban ; and, as General Keary considered that to make a frontal attack would involve undue losses, he sent out wider reconnaissances to look for another crossing over the Mahrut canal. But without success. At 2.30 p.m. he received a message from General Maude :—

> " It looks very much as if enemy had been slipping away all night across Diyala.† . . . It is of utmost importance that you should pin him to his ground and, if he will not be so pinned and retreats, you should attack him vigorously. . . ."

General Keary, thereupon, decided to make a frontal attack next morning ; and during the night two infantry battalions with some machine guns crossed the canal.

The Turks, however withdrew in the early hours of the 23rd March. The 47th Sikhs occupied Shahraban at 7 a.m. ; and an advanced guard of one squadron of cavalry, a field battery and two battalions of infantry engaged and followed

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* Informing General Baratoff that the British were trying to cut off the Turkish XIII Corps and asking for co-operation.

† This proved subsequently to be wrong.

up the Turkish rear guard till checked by artillery fire along the line of the Haruniya canal. By 2 p.m., the whole of General Keary's force was concentrated at or north-east of Shahraban ; but under orders from General Maude the 7th Cavalry Brigade, less 13th Lancers and a section "V" Battery, R.H.A., moved back to Baquba.*

To understand the reason for this latter move, a short digression is necessary to describe the general situation of General Maude's army. A brigade group of the Ist Corps was holding Falluja ; the greater part of the remainder of the 3rd Division was with General Keary and the remainder of the Corps was round Baghdad on the Tigris right bank. The IIIrd Corps was on the Tigris left bank from near Kasirin to the Diyala, having been mainly employed in work on roads and river embankments, and was also holding the Diyala line of communications including Baquba ; and troops of the Tigris Line of Communication Defences held the line of that river up to its junction with the Diyala.

There was no further news of Baratoff's force and the Turkish dispositions were believed to be practically as they had been estimated on the 21st. The movement of the Turkish 51st and 52nd Divisions across the Tigris seemed, however, to indicate either a junction or active co-operation with their XIII Corps; and on the 23rd General Maude issued orders to meet this change of situation. The Cavalry Division, less a regiment and two horse artillery guns remaining with General Keary, was to concentrate near Baquba and move to Tokana next day; and General Lewin's column of the 40th Infantry Brigade, two 18-pounder and one howitzer batteries and a proportion of divisional troops, was on the 24th to occupy Diltawa, Jadida and Sindiya. Arab information received that day at General Headquarters indicated that no large body from the Turkish XIII Corps had yet crossed the Diyala. It was said to be waiting till the great quantity of supplies it had been collecting from the Badra and Mandali districts at Khaniqin for the last three weeks had been taken across ; the reason being that there was great scarcity in the Kifri-Mosul area.

General Maude's operation order of the 24th March (issued in the late afternoon), estimated the number of the enemy in the area Qizil Ribat-Jabal Hamrin at 350 sabres, 5,330 rifles and 24 guns and said that the Turkish 2nd Division and

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* During the 23rd March the casualties in General Keary's force totalled 52.

Cavalry Brigade, composed of some 850 sabres, 6,500 rifles and 26 guns, were due shortly in the Khaniqin area retreating before the Russians then approaching Qasr-i-Shirin.* It also anticipated that the Turkish XVIII Corps, consisting of about 550 sabres, 5,570 rifles and 34 guns, might advance next day from the vicinity of Samarra down both banks of the Tigris towards the line Balad-Adhaim river. General Maude's intention was to hold the enemy in the vicinity of Qizil Ribat to his ground and prevent him, pending the arrival of the Russians, from breaking westward across the Diyala. For this purpose General Keary was to continue operations against the troops on the Jabal Hamrin on the left bank of the Diyala, the Cavalry Division was to push forward and secure the bridges at Lambarak and Delli Abbas, and General Lewin was to hold two infantry battalions ready to move towards Lambarak if ordered.

General Maude was still without recent news of the progress of the Russians following up the Turkish XIII Corps, though he was telegraphing his own movements to them frequently and trying to get in touch with them by aeroplane.

To return to General Keary's operations. His advanced troops under considerable shell fire got no farther on the 23rd March than the high raised banks of the Haruniya canal, which was about thirty feet wide with a six-feet depth of water. About a quarter of a mile beyond it lay the Ruz canal, which was without raised embankments, forty-five to sixty feet wide and with a depth of nine to twelve feet of water. These details were not ascertained till next day, but the bridge over the Ruz canal was reported to be destroyed; and the enemy was holding a position about a mile beyond the broken bridge, astride the road in the foothills of the Jabal Hamrin. This range consists of a series of conglomerate hills with rounded crests rising, one behind the other, in an intricate mass of broken ridges and ravines, to an ultimate height of about 600 feet. Besides providing the Turks with a position offering excellent fields of observation and fire, it afforded admirable cover.

Little could be learnt of the topography of the area from the inaccurate maps available; and active reconnaissance by our aeroplanes and troops did not enable us to gain anything but a general idea of the enemy's dispositions and strength. In the afternoon, judging from the reports received, General

* This last statement was really premature.

Keary estimated that the enemy force consisted of about 3,000 rifles and 10 to 12 guns. The strength of his own force was about 4,600 rifles and 26 guns ;* and he came to the conclusion that he could best fulfil his mission—i.e., to pin the enemy to his ground and prevent him slipping away across the Diyala—by attacking, and, if possible, turning the Turkish left flank. Should the enemy be weaker than the British, General Keary hoped to defeat him and drive him off the hills ; while should he be stronger than was estimated, it should be possible, by entrenching on the hills, to hold him so closely that he could only retreat by sacrificing his rear guard. General Campbell, commanding 9th Infantry Brigade, was accordingly instructed to make a personal reconnaissance eastward for a route by which his brigade with artillery could outflank the enemy. Should the enemy move many of his troops eastward to oppose such a movement, General Keary would attack his depleted front with the 8th Infantry Brigade.

In General Keary's operation order, issued at 9.45 p.m. on the 23rd, the enemy's line was said to extend from the Diyala to some two and a half miles east of the main road and his strength was estimated at from 3,000 to 4,500 rifles, 12 guns and 8 machine guns. The details given concerning the two canals were necessarily vague ; and General Keary's stated intention was to secure the heights east of the enemy's position and drive him off the road on to the Diyala. General Campbell, with the 13th Lancers, section "V" Battery, R.H.A., 9th Infantry Brigade, one battery 215th Brigade, R.F.A., one company 34th Pioneers and a section 18th Company Sappers and Miners with a pontoon and two bays of superstructure, was to make a night march by the route already reconnoitred, secure the heights east of the enemy, and after sunrise on 24th March (6.3. a.m.) attack and roll up the enemy's line from the eastward. The 8th Infantry and 4th Artillery† Brigades were to deploy in the dark on both sides of the main road and advance at daylight, but were not to press home their attack till that of General Campbell had made its influence felt. General Keary would keep a battery 215th Brigade and the remainder of the Pioneers and Sappers under his own orders.

General Campbell's column, starting eastward at 11 p.m. on the 23rd March, was much delayed by numerous small

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* In reporting the strength of this column to India and London as 8,000, General Maude seems to have overlooked the weak strengths of the units composing it.

† 7th, 14th and B/69th Batteries.

canals, one of which had to be bridged; and the Haruniya canal was not reached till 4.30 a.m. on the 24th. A bridge over this was not completed till 8 a.m., and during its construction General Campbell sent back to General Keary for more bridging material required for the Ruz canal, whose width and depth he had only just learnt from his scouts. To provide this material, pontoons had to be taken from the Jalali bridge,* and it was not till 8.30 p.m. that the Ruz canal was finally spanned by what was known as "Campbell's Bridge." In the meantime, on the main road, material had been sent forward to bridge the Ruz canal; but it was found insufficient and General Keary had to ask General Headquarters to send up some more urgently.† The 8th Infantry Brigade, commencing its advance at 6 a.m., was stopped by the Ruz canal and came under considerable shell fire, the enemy disclosing about twelve guns. In the afternoon the brigade major‡ reconnoitred the enemy position from an aeroplane and reported it as possessing great natural strength and considerable depth owing to the series of ridges along which it lay. The front scarps of these were entrenched in many places in three tiers and the left flank was refused about five miles from the Diyala. There were many tents and much impedimenta in the various ravines; and, as canals abounded between the British left and the Diyala, the only hope of a successful attack appeared to be against the enemy's left flank.

General Keary, obliged to postpone his attack and with insufficient material as yet to bridge the Ruz canal in more than one place, decided to move two battalions of the 8th Infantry Brigade to near Campbell's Bridge so as to attack the enemy's left next morning in as great strength as possible. He issued orders at 7.50 p.m. for General Campbell to move his column across the Ruz canal as soon as it was bridged and occupy the foothills, moving forward to the heights as soon as it began to get light; and once on the main ridge he was to attack and roll up the enemy towards the Diyala. The 8th Brigade (less two battalions) was, from dawn onwards, to demonstrate vigorously to its front to hold the enemy.

Telegraphing that evening to India and London, General Maude said that he was not yet in touch, even by aeroplane,

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* Their place was taken by trestles.

† The canals between Baghdad and Shahraban had taken up much bridging material.

‡ Captain P. C. S. Hobart, R.E.

with the Russians. He seems to have heard that day, however, from Colonel Wavell that the Turkish XIII Corps appeared to be effecting its retreat with little loss.

Leaving the 13th Lancers and the two horse artillery guns to guard his right flank, and B/215th Battery in position south of the bridge, General Campbell's column advanced from there on a general bearing of 55°; and at 1.30 a.m. on the 25th March reached, without opposition, the lower edge of the foothills. After halting there for four hours, the advance was resumed on the same general bearing, the 2nd Dorsetshire leading, with the 105th Mahrattas and 1/1st Gurkhas echeloned back on its right and left respectively. The Dorsets and Gurkhas met slight opposition from enemy piquets, and the Dorsets gained a forward crest line from which they could see a higher crest, about two and a half miles northward, across a tangled area of hills and ravines. After advancing for a short distance over this difficult ground, the Dorsets swung to their left to attack the enemy—about one thousand yards distant—holding a north-east to south-west line which he was rapidly reinforcing from neighbouring ravines. From a point on the forward crest about half a mile to the left of the Dorsets, the Gurkha line extended south-westward towards the plain, being about one thousand yards distant from the enemy line. By about 7 a.m. the hostile gun, machine gun and rifle fire made progress by the Dorsets very difficult, and General Campbell reinforced both them and the Gurkhas with a machine gun section each, and also sent two companies 105th Mahrattas to fill the gap between the Dorsets and Gurkhas.

But, before the Mahrattas arrived, the Dorsets were driven back for about six hundred yards by a Turkish counter-attack; and for the next two hours these two and a half battalions withstood a succession of enemy counter-attacks. About 9 a.m. General Campbell reinforced the line, sending a company 34th Pioneers and a company 93rd Infantry up on the Gurkhas' right and the two remaining companies 105th Mahrattas up on the Dorsets' right, where there appeared to be a danger of the enemy getting round our flank. So far, our attack, though exposed to hostile artillery fire, was receiving little or no support from our own guns; though in action, they were too far off for effective support, which in any case the configuration of the ground rendered very difficult. General Keary, who was at Campbell's Bridge, did not feel justified in pushing guns across it under hostile artillery fire until a second bridge, then under construction, had been completed.

About 9.30 a.m., realising from General Campbell's messages that the enemy was in too great strength for the attack to succeed, General Keary directed General Campbell to prepare to retire to a position about one thousand yards northward of the Ruz canal; and at the same time ordered the Manchesters and 124th Baluchistan Infantry to advance and cover the retirement. These two battalions joined General Campbell about 11 a.m., and with three companies 93rd Infantry took up a covering position. For the next three and a half hours General Campbell's first line was heavily engaged withstanding a series of determined attacks; and about noon, these necessitated an urgent request by him for closer artillery support. General Keary at once sent B/215th Battery forward, across the bridge, for a distance of about 1,500 yards, where it came into action in the open; but the series of crests held by the enemy gave them considerable immunity from our shell fire.*

General Maude at Baghdad was, as usual, keeping in touch with the operations by wireless and at 12.55 p.m. two messages from him reached General Keary. The first said that, from the map, it was difficult to follow General Keary's dispositions and it was not easy to estimate the enemy's strength; but it seemed undesirable to commit infantry to a serious attack without artillery support. The best means of carrying out the mission of the force—to hold the enemy to his ground and prevent his escape before the Russians could co-operate—was, certainly, to attack if good opportunity offered and the enemy was weak. But as both the 2nd and 6th Turkish Divisions might be in the neighbourhood, General Keary should be prepared to pass temporarily to the defensive if the absence of the Russians and the enemy's strength rendered such a course desirable. But only General Keary could decide. The second message queried the necessity for a retirement by the 9th Brigade.

At 1.15 p.m., General Keary replied. His offensive had been designed to hold the enemy to his ground, thus meeting the spirit and scope of General Maude's instructions. But the enemy had proved to be in superior strength and consequently the 9th Brigade, reinforced by two battalions in general reserve,

* The remainder of General Keary's artillery was near the main road, where it could counter-battery the enemy's guns, and would be able to support General Campbell's attack when it progressed westward.

had withdrawn to a position in the foothills,* which it was proposed to hold till dark, when the force would probably fall back to a position covering the Ruz bridges. General Keary explained how he was hampered by lack of bridges and the configuration of the ground from affording the attack artillery support ; but he was certain that he was holding and inflicting casualties on more than one Turkish division and he did not mean to let go his hold. This message crossed another from General Maude saying that news just received from the Russians showed that they were being persistently engaged, by part at any rate of the Turkish 2nd Division, at a point about five marches distant from Shahraban.† Consequently it was estimated that the maximum force opposite General Keary was 350 sabres, 5,300 rifles and 24 guns, so that unless he had disseminated his force he should be able to deal very satisfactorily with the enemy. From this, General Maude appears still to have been under a misapprehension as to the numerical strength of General Keary's force.

With regard to this estimate of the enemy's strength, subsequent information showed that the Turkish force consisted of twelve infantry battalions of the 1st, 5th, 16th, 18th, and 37th Regiments,‡ numbering about 5,400 rifles with about 24 guns. Late that night General Maude telegraphed that General Keary's telegram of 1.15 p.m. had satisfied him.

To return to the fighting. About 2 p.m., the Mahrattas on the right of the firing line were forced to make a short retirement and soon afterwards the whole of the line on the Gurkha right including the Dorsets was driven back to the forward crest ; while about the same time the Gurkhas also were forced back temporarily, though their battalion supports soon restored the position. At 2.30 p.m., when the enemy was pressing the whole front hard and threatening both flanks, General Campbell ordered the firing line to retire through the supporting line to take up a position in the plain covering the Ruz canal bridges. The retirement was well carried out under heavy shell fire from at least 22 guns, which cost us many casualties ; the Manchesters especially distinguishing themselves by steady gallantry.

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* This term was used by General Keary, but, really, the 9th Brigade was still astride the forward crest of the range.

† i.e., at the Pai Taq pass.

‡ Four battalions 1st Regiment and one battalion 5th Regiment belonging to the 2nd Division, 16th and 18th Regiments (three battalions each) of the 6th Division and the 3/37th Regiment (52nd Division), which had been at Baquba since about 6th March.

The Turks showed little desire to press matters after our troops had cleared the hills. Some of their cavalry attempted to charge our right flank, but were driven off by the fire of the 13th Lancers and "V" Battery guns; and their infantry trying to emerge from the foothills were speedily driven back by our infantry fire.

The retirement was completed by 5 p.m. Two and a half companies 47th Sikhs from near the main road arrived to form General Reserve about 4.30 p.m., and took up a line north of the Ruz canal to cover both bridges, where they were joined by the Manchesters and 2/124th Baluchis. The 9th Brigade moved south of the Haruniya canal to reorganise; and the 8th Brigade held the line from near Campbell's Bridge to west of the main road for the night.

The British casualties had been severe and are a testimony to the gallantry of officers and men. They totalled 1,165 (122 killed, 727 wounded and 316 missing), being practically all among the six infantry battalions and pioneer company engaged under General Campbell. Although the records do not give all their actual strengths, these units were much below their full establishments and consequently the general percentage of losses to strength was high. The 105th Mahrattas had 286 casualties, the 2nd Dorsetshire 220, the 93rd Infantry 161 (out of a strength of 465), the 1/1st Gurkhas 146 (out of about 400), the 2/124th Baluchistan Infantry 125, the 1st Manchester 102 (out of about 400) and the 34th Sikh Pioneer company 80. During the fighting the stretcher bearers had distinguished themselves by steady gallantry in carrying the wounded back under fire for about 4,000 yards.

The news received by General Maude (from Colonel Wavell) showed that Baratoff's infantry were still at Kermanshah or between Kermanshah and Hamadan, and that only 32 squadrons of Cossacks with 12 field guns were pushing on in pursuit and in touch with the Turks at the Pai Taq pass. There was no telegraphic or telephonic communication with the advanced troops and messages had to be carried most of the way by despatch riders, so that it took time to get news. Further, the Russian columns about Bane were unable to advance owing to the snow.* On the 25th March General Maude also

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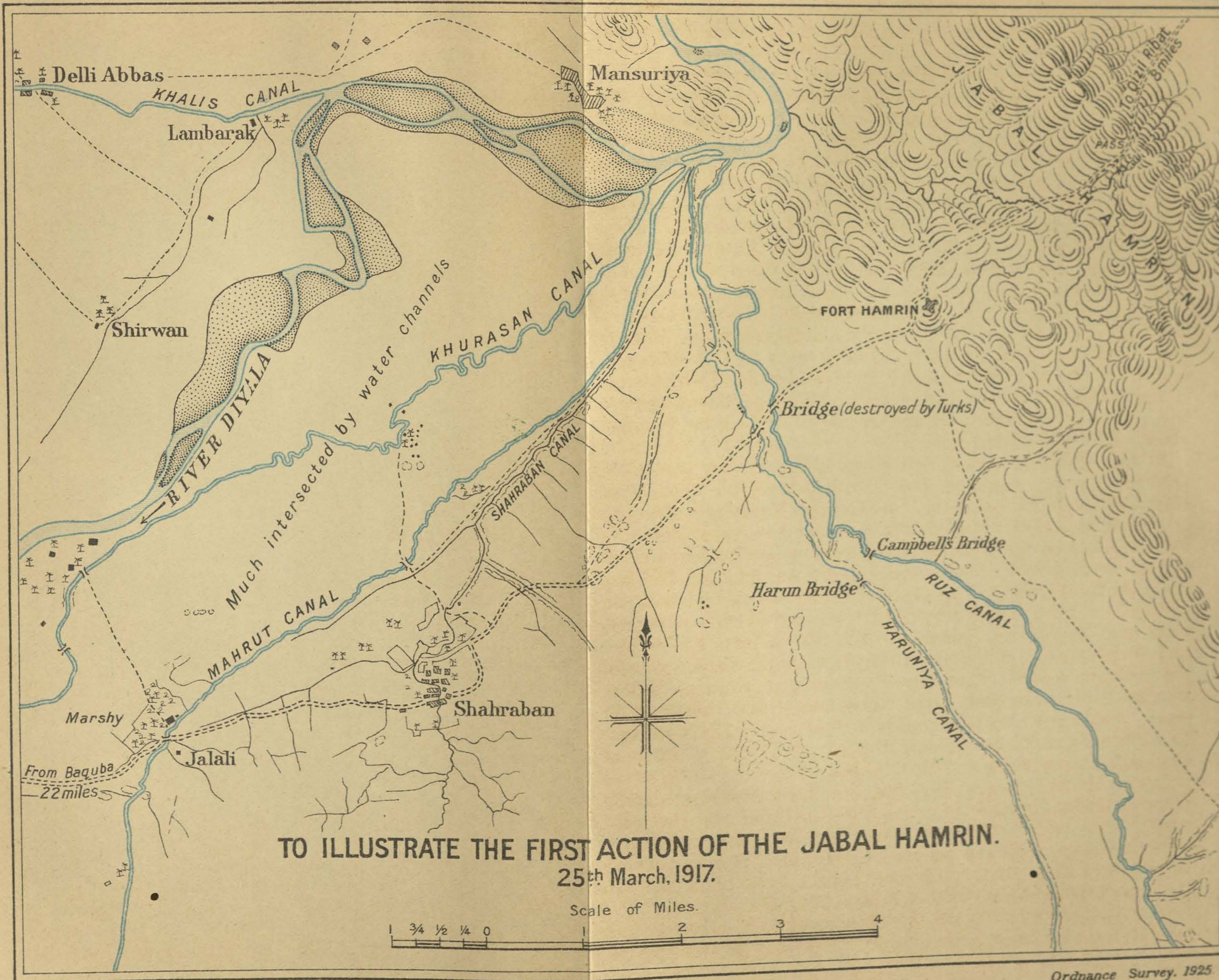
* At this time Colonel Wavell telegraphed to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff that the general condition of the Russian army on the Caucasus main front made it unlikely that serious operations could be undertaken there till the approach of summer.

obtained news about the Turkish supplies which indicated their intention to concentrate at Samarra or between there and Khaniqin.

On the morning of the 25th March, the Cavalry Division under General Jones left Tokana to advance between the Diyala river and the Khalis canal and seize the bridges at Delli Abbas and Lambarak. But, once more, the map proved most misleading and the country was found to be so intersected by irrigation canals that the 6th Cavalry Brigade had to be diverted to the Diltawa-Delli Abbas road, while the rest of the division sought for a road up the Diyala right bank. They eventually found a track leading towards Lambarak and, following it, our patrols located an enemy force of all three arms in some strength holding a position about sixteen miles north-east of Diltawa, i.e., opposite Avashik. The 6th Cavalry Brigade, north of the Khalis canal, encountered no enemy except two or three troops of cavalry seen in the distance, and Arabs who were met reported none nearer than Delli Abbas. It was, however, too late in the day to start operations against the enemy's position, and the cavalry went into bivouac about eight miles from it.

In his operation order, issued at 4.30 p.m. on the 25th, General Maude estimated the Turkish force on the Jabal Hamrin (Diyala left bank) opposite General Keary at a strength of 350 sabres, 4,500 rifles and 16 guns, and he said that only one regiment of the Turkish 2nd Division had so far arrived in that area. On the Tigris, the enemy was holding the line of the Adhaim river, having possibly some men on its left bank, with 250 sabres, 3,200 rifles and 24 guns; there were 800 rifles and 38 guns at Samarra; and 300 sabres, 1,570 rifles and 10 guns were at Balad on the Tigris right bank (west of the Adhaim mouth). On the Euphrates at Ramadi, where trenches were being dug, were 200 sabres, 3,000 rifles and 14 guns. General Keary's column and the Cavalry Division were to continue operations against the enemy in the vicinity of Qizil Ribat, Lambarak and Delli Abbas.

During the night of the 25th/26th March General Keary had a pontoon bridge constructed across the Ruz canal near the main road; and on the 26th his force kept in touch, by active reconnaissance, with the enemy on the Jabal Hamrin, where he was still in strength. On the Diyala right bank the 7th Cavalry Brigade (less 13th Lancers and one section "V" Battery) advanced early on the 26th towards Lambarak, and the 6th Cavalry Brigade, having found no way of crossing the



TO ILLUSTRATE THE FIRST ACTION OF THE JABAL HAMRIN.

25th March, 1917.

Ordnance Survey. 1925

PREPARED IN THE HISTORICAL SECTION OF THE COMMITTEE OF IMPERIAL DEFENCE.

Khalis canal,* was ordered to rejoin the division via Diltawa. Patrols of the 7th Cavalry Brigade gained contact with the enemy at 8.30 a.m., and after reconnaissance the brigade advanced mounted to the attack, soon coming under considerable rifle and machine gun fire and some artillery fire. The enemy was found to be holding an advanced position with about 500 infantry, with a second position in rear held by about 2,000 infantry and 10 guns ; and the 7th Cavalry Brigade was ordered to break off the action and withdraw. It had suffered but few casualties and its withdrawal was completed by about 5.30 p.m., when, being joined by the 6th Cavalry Brigade, the division bivouacked about six miles from the enemy's position.

By this time the British Intelligence Staff had organised, by several means, but especially by careful co-ordination of the various sources of information on the different Turkish fronts, a highly efficient system for obtaining timely news of the enemy's numbers and intentions ; and early on the 26th General Maude telegraphed to the IIIrd Corps that reliable information indicated that the enemy intended to carry out that day a converging movement from Delli Abbas and the line of the Adhaim against our advanced position on the Tigris left bank. The maximum strength he could bring was estimated at 50 sabres, 1,600 rifles and 8 guns from Delli Abbas and 300 sabres, 4,400 rifles and 24 guns from the Adhaim. General Marshall was at once to concentrate sufficient strength to frustrate the enemy's intention and to defeat him. The Cavalry Division received orders to delay the enemy if he advanced from the Lambarak direction, and was warned to be careful not to get cut off from the 13th Division. This division was ordered by General Marshall to concentrate rapidly to its front, where during the day the cavalry patrols of General Lewin's force saw to the north of the Diltawa-Sindiya line bodies of enemy cavalry and infantry, and the left of the line and our naval gunboats near Sindiya were shelled by hostile artillery.

Hearing, early on the 27th March, that the left of General Lewin's line was being shelled, and that the enemy was entrenching about four miles north of Sindiya, General Maude sent General Marshall instructions that, as soon as he could assemble an adequate force, he was to locate and attack the enemy to the north, whose strength might amount to 300 sabres, 5,000 rifles and 24 guns.

* The Turks had broken the bridges as they retired.

General Maude's operation order, issued a few hours later, estimated the enemy's dispositions as follows :—

Jabal Hamrin, Diyala left bank (2nd and 6th Divisions) :— 550 sabres, 6,000 rifles, 26 guns.

Lambarak-Delli Abbas, Diyala right bank (14th Division) :—250 sabres, 2,400 rifles, 10 guns.

Advancing from the Adhaim, Tigris left bank (51st and 52nd Divisions) :—300 sabres, 4,500 rifles, 24 guns.

Tigris right bank :—200 sabres.

The order continued :—

" It is anticipated that enemy by converging movement of his forces from Delli Abbas and Shatt al Adhaim towards Diltawa will endeavour to pass his Khaniqin forces across towards line of Shatt al Adhaim. It is intended to take advantage of enemy's temerity in concentrating his scattered forces within striking distance of our troops, first by destroying Shatt al Adhaim force, which consists of already beaten troops, and then by dealing with Delli Abbas force.

Keary's Column to continue to hold enemy to his ground at Jabal Hamrin and to hinder him from passing troops westward across Diyala. As, with approach of Russians, enemy may temporarily become stronger in his front, his position to be made as secure as possible.

Cavalry Division to retard, and operate vigorously against, any advance along Lambarak-Muhurar road.

IIIrd Corps, whilst containing Delli Abbas force towards Chaliya, to attack and rout Shatt al Adhaim force with which it is already in touch. Rapidity of action is essential, as enemy will no doubt gradually pass troops across Diyala from Jabal Hamrin, their places being taken by fresh arrivals retreating before Russians.

(Then followed orders for IIIrd Corps to reinforce Baquba and neighbourhood for security of that area).

Ist Corps to hold mobile column of one infantry brigade with proportion of divisional troops in readiness to operate up right bank of Tigris if ordered. Also to take early opportunity of defeating enemy at Ramadi.

Prompt and vigorous action is in all cases necessary to take full advantage of scattered positions of enemy forces, to deal with them before reinforcements from Persia or elsewhere arrive, to give them no time to entrench themselves, to take advantage of fine weather, and to

complete operations before floods, which are now due, commence. Acknowledge." *

By dusk on the 27th March, the 13th Division had concentrated as follows :—

On a line from Abu Tamar westward to the Tigris.—40th Infantry Brigade, with 7th North Staffordshire (39th Brigade), 55th Brigade, R.F.A.† and 88th Company R.E.

At Jadida.—39th Infantry Brigade (less 7th North Staffordshire and 9th Worcestershire, the latter guarding river embankments).

At Jemadin.—13th Division Headquarters, 38th Infantry Brigade, 66th Brigade, R.F.A. (less one battery)‡ and 134th Howitzer Brigade.§ This group had marched thirty-four miles in twenty-two hours.

At Yahudiya.—2/104th Battery (60-pounders) halted, pending repairs to roads and bridges to carry heavy guns.

Reconnaissances of the enemy position were to be carried out with a view to an attack early on the 29th.

On the 27th, the 6th Cavalry Brigade, moving forward between the Diyala and the Khalis canal to reconnoitre the enemy's position and make him disclose his strength, was attacked soon after midday by about 2,000 Turkish infantry with five guns. The enemy pushed forward with great boldness and determination ; and, although their advance was temporarily checked by the fire of "S" Battery, R.H.A., the Turks gradually forced back the left of the cavalry line and began to work round its left flank. Falling back over difficult country to give time for the remainder of the Cavalry Division to take up a supporting position in rear, the 6th Cavalry Brigade, skilfully handled, caused the enemy considerable loss, and at nightfall, having finally checked the hostile advance, took over the left of the defensive position which the Cavalry Division held for the night. The cavalry casualties during the day amounted to ten, including the brigade-major of the 6th Cavalry Brigade killed.||

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* Issued by telegram.

† A, B, C and D Batteries and A/69th Howitzer Battery = 16 guns and 4 howitzers.

‡ B, C and D Batteries and 72nd Howitzer Battery = 12 guns and 4 howitzers.

§ 12 howitzers.

|| This was the second brigade-major of the 6th Cavalry Brigade killed during the operations in March, 1917.

Next morning (28th) the 7th Cavalry Brigade moved out and engaged the enemy, who began to fall back pressed by the brigade all the afternoon. In this operation the brigade was assisted by the effective fire, from the left bank of the Diyala, of two horse and two field guns detached for the purpose with two squadrons 13th Lancers by General Keary, in whose front the enemy had to some extent withdrawn his line, but otherwise showed no activity. General Keary made arrangements with the Turkish commander for stretcher bearers under Red Cross flags to collect the wounded.

During the 28th March the 13th Division closed up to its front, being joined by the 13th Light Armoured Motor Battery, the 22nd Cavalry (6th Cavalry Brigade)* and a section "S" Battery, R.H.A.; and reconnaissances were carried out, with much difficulty owing to the strong mirage, of the enemy's position about Mara.

During the 27th, General Maude received information that the Turkish XIII Corps had moved its 1st Regiment on the Jabal Hamrin from the left to the right bank of the Diyala, thus freeing the 14th Division (3rd, 142nd and 156th Regiments)† to advance against our Cavalry Division. The XIII Corps was said to have 50 guns, including two 10·5 cm. howitzers, and the XVIII Corps to have 72 guns, including several 10·5 cm. howitzers and fifteen 15 cm. howitzers. The 6th Division was said to consist of the 16th, 18th and another regiment of uncertain number, as well as a battalion of the 37th Regiment, while the 2nd Division included the 1st, 5th and 6th Regiments. On the 28th March information was received that the headquarters of the 2nd Division and the main body of the XIII Corps intended to cross to the Diyala right bank and take up a line, presumably on the left of the XVIII Corps; and prisoners said that the force engaged with our cavalry division the previous day had consisted of the 33rd Cavalry and 156th Regiment. It was also learnt that the Turkish Sixth Army expected reinforcements of a division (4,800 rifles) and drafts (1,200 rifles) to reach it by the end of April; these being in addition to two divisions reported as on their way to Mosul, where their leading units were expected to arrive about the 31st March. It thus appeared

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* Half 2nd Norfolk Regiment from Baquba was sent to the 6th Cavalry Brigade temporarily.

† The 156th Regiment had absorbed two battalions 64th Regiment and the 64th Regiment on the Euphrates had absorbed two battalions 156th Regiment, i.e., each regiment had absorbed half the other.

that the Turks meant to offer a determined resistance to any advance on Mosul. Twelve new aeroplanes, half of them Halberstadts, were also expected to reach Mosul early in April. General Maude was still without news of the progress of Baratoff's force, but apparently the Turks still had some troops between the Russians and Khaniqin.

In his operation order, issued at 2.15 p.m. on the 28th March, General Maude estimated the Turkish dispositions* as follows :—

Jabal Hamrin (Diyala left bank) :—550 sabres, 4,200 rifles, 22 guns.

Jabal Hamrin about Mansuriya (Diyala right bank) :—1,800 rifles, 4 guns.

Advanced troops from Delli Abbas–Lambarak, about Lubi and Chaliya :—250 sabres, 2,400 rifles, 10 guns.

Tigris left bank, about Mara :—300 sabres, 4,500 rifles, 24 guns.

Tigris right bank, about twelve miles west-south-west of Sindiya :—200 sabres, 300 rifles, 4 guns.

It seemed clear that the enemy was carrying out the converging movement mentioned in the previous day's operation order, and that his Khaniqin force had begun crossing the Diyala to move to the Adhaim line. General Maude confirmed his previously-announced intention of destroying the enemy force at Mara before it could be joined by the force moving from Delli Abbas via Bint al Hassan, but he said that the complete success of his plan would depend mainly on the retardation of this last movement by a portion of the IIIrd Corps to be detailed for that purpose. General Keary's column was to hold the enemy to the Jabal Hamrin, hindering him from passing troops across the Diyala ; the Cavalry Division was to retard and operate vigorously against any advance along the Lambarak–Muhurar road or north of that road ; and the IIIrd Corps was to contain the Delli Abbas force towards Chaliya while it dealt with the Mara force.

The British 13th Division outpost line extended from Abu Tamar to the Tigris bank north-east of Sindiya (see Map 29). Some three miles north of the latter point lay the right of the Turkish position, whence it extended north-eastward for one or two miles, astride the old Nahrwan canal, and then bent back to some old ruins (four miles north of Mara) reported to be the enemy's extreme left flank. This line was reported only partially entrenched. Except for some wide and deep

* The total strength of the Turkish Sixth Army was estimated to be 2,100 sabres, 22,100 rifles and 128 guns.

dry water-courses, which ran generally parallel to the enemy's line, the approaches to this position east of the Nahrwan canal lay over an open barren plain. The Turks were evidently prepared for an advance by us up and close to the canal, between which and the Tigris the ground was marshy.

General Cayley, commanding 13th Division, arranged to combine a frontal attack against the enemy's left centre, east of the Nahrwan canal, with an outflanking movement against his extreme left at the Ruins, and at the same time to guard against a possible Turkish advance from Bint al Hassan. During the night of the 28th/29th, two battalions 38th Brigade took over the outpost line from the 40th Brigade, which, with the 66th Brigade, R.F.A., concentrated at the light railway crossing over the Nahrwan canal and moved forward at 3 a.m. to attack the Turkish left centre. The 39th Brigade (three battalions only), 55th Brigade, R.F.A., squadron Hertfordshire Yeomanry and 13th Light Armoured Motor Battery concentrated at Abu Tamar wood, whence the infantry and artillery moved forward at 1.30 a.m., on a bearing of 340°, with orders to get into a position outflanking the enemy's left by 5.30 a.m. The 22nd Cavalry and section "S" Battery, R.H.A., were to be in position by 6 a.m. to stop any hostile advance from Bint al Hassan; and the 38th Brigade (less two battalions) was to form divisional reserve near Khan Nahrwan, General Cayley's headquarters. The 2/104th Battery (60-pounders) and the 134th Brigade, R.F.A., were to come into action to the right rear of the 40th Brigade for counter-battery work.

By 5.45 a.m. on the 29th March, the 39th Brigade group reached a point about five miles east of the Ruins, where it was joined not long after by the Hertfordshire Yeomanry and the armoured cars, and the two latter units advanced and drove back some enemy cavalry, who, supported by infantry skirmishers, were advancing some distance eastward of the Ruins. The armoured cars continued to push on, but coming under heavy artillery fire had to fall back; and the 39th Brigade started to advance westward about 7 a.m.

In the meantime, the 40th Brigade group had moved up to a position, in broken ground east of the Nahrwan canal, about one and a half miles north of the railway crossing. As it became light, they saw to the north-west a line of Turkish outposts apparently some 5,000 yards distant, but this disappeared on being shelled. After reconnaissance, the 5th Wiltshire started to advance at 7 a.m., coming under shell and rifle fire half an hour later as they reached a dry water-course some 1,400 yards

to the north-west. Pushing on from here at 8 a.m. to locate the enemy's trenches, with the 4th South Wales Borderers to their left rear, they soon came under heavy rifle, machine gun and artillery fire, which, on the bare open plain, caused them many casualties. But they continued to advance gallantly and steadily and drove the enemy from a line of rifle pits about 1,700 yards further to their front. Here half the South Wales Borderers came up on the Wiltshire left and both battalions dug themselves in, apparently only a few hundred yards short of the enemy's main line. The 66th and 134th Brigades and 2/104th Battery of artillery now moved forward, and by 10 a.m. were in a position to support the infantry closely. But the enemy's position could not be accurately located through the mirage, nor his artillery fire checked; and General Cayley decided that the 40th Brigade should suspend its advance until the result of the 39th Brigade advance became clearer.

The 39th Brigade had begun its advance with the Warwicks and Gloucestershire in first line and the North Staffordshire in reserve, the 55th Brigade, R.F.A., keeping well forward to support closely the movement, which was carried out under considerable hostile shell fire over an absolutely flat and open plain. By 7.30 a.m. the enemy infantry were falling back from a line of low mounds some distance east of the Ruins, which at 9.20 a.m. the Hertfordshire Yeomanry reported to be lightly held; and the 39th Brigade continued to advance till about three thousand yards from the Ruins. It was now about 10.30 a.m., the mirage had become very strong and it was very hot, and the 39th Brigade halted to rest its men and to make a closer reconnaissance of the enemy's position. At the same time, in order to assist the advance of the 40th Brigade, the North Staffordshire were sent forward to prolong the left of the first line.

The 22nd Cavalry, with the two guns of "S" Battery, had moved off towards Bint al Hassan at 4 a.m., and, for several miles to the north-east of Abu Tamar wood, met only small parties of Turkish cavalry. General Cayley, however, received several warnings through Corps Headquarters of a probable Turkish advance from this direction; and at 7 a.m., to meet such a contingency, he moved his divisional reserve to Abu Tamar wood.

The 39th Brigade, while halted, saw through the mirage considerable enemy movement along the Nahrwan canal from south to north, and our guns fired heavily on these targets.

Enemy movement to the north of the Ruins was also seen, but reconnaissance by the armoured cars disclosed nothing there but enemy cavalry. Receiving an order, issued at 1.30 p.m. by General Cayley, to continue its advance, the 39th Brigade made a general attack with all three battalions—Warwicks on the right, Gloucestershire in the centre and North Staffordshire on the left, each advancing on a two-company front. The machine gun company guarded the right flank and the 55th Brigade, R.F.A., pushed its guns as far forward as possible to cover and support the infantry. The attack was carried out with great dash over an absolutely bare and flat plain in face of heavy rifle, machine gun and artillery fire and met with complete success. The Warwicks and Gloucestershire captured the Ruins, where an enemy battery only escaped capture at the last moment, and whence the enemy infantry fell back westwards under our artillery fire. The North Staffordshire, who had swung somewhat to the south, carried a group of trenches and captured a machine gun, driving the enemy back into a large dry water-course and broken ground. The men of the 39th Brigade were now much exhausted from their exertions and the heat, besides suffering from want of water, and they received orders to dig themselves in on the line captured.

At 2.30 p.m., the 40th Brigade, seeing artillery fire to the north which indicated an advance by the 39th Brigade, sent forward strong patrols under cover of artillery fire ; but these soon came under heavy hostile fire and suffered severely without being able to locate the enemy's trenches or to make any progress. It seemed evident that no further advance could be made till nightfall ; and, owing to the tired state of the men, the distance between the 39th and 40th Brigades and to further reports* of Turkish movements towards his right, General Cayley considered it inadvisable to continue the attack that night. But at 4.30 p.m. he sent the 38th Brigade (less two battalions) from Abu Tamar wood to join the 39th Brigade ; he formed a new divisional reserve at the wood of two battalions 38th Brigade, the 67th Punjabis and 44th Field Battery—these last two units belonging to the 14th Division had arrived that day from Baquba to reinforce him—and in the evening he issued orders for the continuation of the attack next morning. During the night, however, the enemy evacuated his position and retired to the line of the Adhaim river.†

* There is no record of what these were exactly.

† At 10 p.m. General Marshall received a message from General Headquarters that information had been received that the Turkish 52nd Division would withdraw that night and patrols of the 13th Division verified this.

In this 'affair of Duqma'—as it is called from the village of that name four miles north-west of Mara—the Turks, whose strength was subsequently estimated to have been about 3,000 rifles and 20 guns of the 52nd Division, must have suffered considerable casualties, as we buried nearly 200 bodies and took about 180 prisoners. They had fought well, but their prisoners said that our attack from the east had taken them by surprise, owing to the mirage. The British casualties totalled 514, of which 255 occurred in the 39th Brigade and 245 in the 40th Brigade, the heaviest sufferers being the Wiltshire with 197 casualties out of a strength of about 500 and the Warwickshire (strength unknown) with 147.

During the 29th March, the Cavalry Division moved forward between the Diyala and the Khalis canal, and, encountering only small bodies of Turkish cavalry and infantry retiring, pushed on to opposite Avashik, where it bivouacked for the night. At 7 p.m. General Maude telegraphed to the IIIrd Corps that he had received reliable information that the enemy force near Delli Abbas had received orders at midday to move as quickly as possible to the assistance of its 52nd Division, then being attacked by the British 13th Division; and consequently General Marshall was again to warn General Cayley of this danger. General Marshall ordered the immediate despatch from Baquba, to reinforce the 13th Division, of an infantry battalion, two field howitzers and a machine gun section of 14th Division. Uncertain as to the situation in the immediate front of the 13th Division, General Marshall decided to hold Diltawa till he could collect stronger forces, in view of the threatened danger to his right flank; and he ordered two companies of the Norfolks that were with the Cavalry Division to move to Diltawa. But early next morning General Maude sent the IIIrd Corps another message saying that he had learnt that the Turkish 14th Division had continued its withdrawal towards Kifri instead of complying with the order to assist the 52nd Division. General Marshall was, therefore, to act vigorously.

On the 29th General Maude found that there were so many difficulties in carrying out the operation against Ramadi, which he had ordered, that he instructed the Ist Corps to abandon the project.

On the 30th March, the Cavalry Division, following up the retiring Turkish 14th Division, occupied Delli Abbas; and the 13th Division, after clearing the Duqma battlefield, concentrated at Diltawa. Reconnaissance by General Keary's force

indicated that the Turks were still holding the Jabal Hamrin in strength, and air reconnaissance beyond Qasr-i-Shirin failed to find any trace of the Russians. General Maude had reliable evidence that on the 29th they were still checked at the Pai Taq pass by only one regiment (6th) of the Turkish 2nd Division and some Turkish cavalry. But that night he learnt that the Turks had completed a bridge over the Diyala about twelve miles south-west of Khaniqin and that they had begun to withdraw troops from the Jabal Hamrin about 3 a.m., on the 29th. He also received information that Halil, their Sixth Army Commander, was moving his headquarters to Kifri.

On the 31st March, General Keary's troops occupied the Jabal Hamrin, which the Turks had evacuated; and the Cavalry Division, which had encountered the enemy in position astride the road some miles beyond Delli Abbas, was ordered to withdraw to Tokana. On that day some of General Baratoff's advanced troops reached the vicinity of Qasr-i-Shirin. His advance had been held up for ten days by the Turks at the gorge by the Pai Taq pass, where the naturally strong position had been previously prepared for defence; and against which, owing to their shortage of food, ammunition and transport, in addition to the difficulties from snow and broken roads, the Russians had been unable to bring their whole strength. This delay, the strong flanking position afforded by the Jabal Hamrin and General Maude's inability, owing to supply considerations and the distance from Baghdad, to send a larger force up the Diyala, enabled the Turks to extricate their XIII Corps from a situation which at one time appeared to offer us and the Russians considerable possibilities. The whole of the Turkish Sixth Army was very short of supplies, and many of their XIII Corps are said to have died, during the retreat from Persia, from sickness or exhaustion; but they appear to have suffered few casualties at the hands of the Russians.

In regard to future intentions of the Russians, General Maude heard on the 30th March that two of their Corps, consisting of 180 squadrons, 44 battalions and 138 guns with an approximate strength of 27,000 sabres and 44,000 rifles, would undertake an offensive towards Mosul, commencing probably about the end of April. Their main line of supply would be Hamadan-Penjwin-Sulaimaniya.

With the exception of some minor changes and additions, especially among the troops on the lines of communication, the Order of Battle of Force 'D' had undergone little

alteration from that given in Appendix XXXVI. Owing to the distance from Baghdad, the control of the force at Bushire was ordered at the end of March to be transferred to the Government of India ; and the change was effected early in April. On the 22nd March, General Maude reported that in consequence of the altered situation, his longer line of communication and the decision to leave the 13th Division in Mesopotamia, he proposed to build up the 15th Division, then on the Euphrates, and bring it to Baghdad ; and this would give him in the Baghdad area one cavalry and five infantry divisions. The remainder of his force, including new battalions coming from India, would garrison the Tigris and Euphrates lines of communication, Nasiriya and Arabistan. The necessity for forming a new division would thus be obviated.

The Tigris line of communication defences had been re-organised in four sections : I. Basra (exclusive) to Amara (inclusive), II. Amara (exclusive) to Shaikh Saad and Dujaila (inclusive), III. Wadi to Bughaila (both inclusive), and IV. Bughaila (exclusive) to Diyala (inclusive). The troops employed on these defences consisted of one regiment of cavalry, sixteen battalions of infantry and eleven guns.*

The Euphrates line of communication defences, still in four sections, were garrisoned by one cavalry regiment, three infantry battalions, eight guns and two armoured trains.†

The lines of communication administration had been organised on the principle of a fixed Base Section and a moving Advanced Section, between which extra sections were interpolated as the line of communication extended. When Baghdad was captured, the following sections were established : Base Section, Qurna Section, Amara Section, Kut Section, and Advanced Section (at Hinaidi, just south of Baghdad). Later, as the forces fanned out in various directions from Baghdad and railway lines spread out in three directions, the Advanced Section took control of the latter, with a "rail-head post" organisation at each rail-head. There was also a Euphrates Section, which was responsible for all administration on the desert railway to Nasiriya ; this also managed the

* 10th Lancers, 1/4th and 1/6th Devonshire, 1st Highland Light Infantry, 1st Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, 2nd Rajputs, 3rd Brahmans, 4th Rajputs, 14th Sikhs, 36th Sikhs, 44th Infantry, 45th Sikhs, 87th Punjabis, 96th Infantry, 2/119th Infantry, 1/5th Gurkhas, Guides Infantry, C/215th Battery, R.F.A., Anglo-Indian Battery (six 15-pounders) and one 4-inch gun.

† Patiala Lancers, 1/4th Somerset Light Infantry, 6th Jats and 1/10th Gurkhas, 21st Mountain Battery and two 18-pounder guns.

river communications from Nasiriya down to the Hammar Lake. That lake itself was controlled by the Qurna Section.

Many of the units at the front and elsewhere were short of establishment, as since the capture of Baghdad there had been much sickness, the numbers of all ranks who were admitted to medical units between the 12th March and the 3rd April being about 37,400. Owing to the many casualties among the Indian followers, the Government of India was experiencing great difficulty in recruiting sufficient numbers to fulfil the requirements of Mesopotamia.

CHAPTER XXXV.

OPERATIONS ROUND BAGHDAD; 1ST TO 18TH APRIL, 1917.

(Maps 26, 30 and 31.)

ON the 1st April, a detachment from General Keary's column, reached Qizil Ribat unopposed; and next morning a *sotnia* of Russian Cossacks also arrived there, accompanied by Lieutenant-Colonel Rowlandson, the British *liaison* officer. The same day Lieutenant-Colonel Tennant, in an aeroplane from Baghdad, landed near the Pai Taq pass and handed over to a Russian column, some 1,500 strong, a letter from General Maude to General Pavloff, who had just taken over from General Baratoff command of the 1st Caucasus Cavalry Corps, i.e., the formation which advanced via Hamadan. In this letter, General Maude, after describing his own situation and dispositions, suggested that the Russians should continue the pursuit towards Kifri of the Turkish XIII Corps, while the British dealt with their XVIII Corps on the Adhaim.

Learning on the 2nd April that General Raddatz, with twenty-three very weak squadrons of Cossacks, one company of infantry and four guns had reached Qasr-i-Shirin on the 31st March,* where he expected another ten companies and six guns to join him on the 2nd April, General Maude telegraphed that afternoon to Colonel Rowlandson that, as the Turkish XIII Corps was now out of his reach, he intended to undertake operations towards Samarra against their XVIII Corps; that, to enable him to do this, he was withdrawing General Keary's column to Baghdad; and that he suggested that General Raddatz could best fulfil their common object by continuing to pursue the Turkish XIII Corps towards Kifri.

The Russian troops and horses showed by their condition that they had undergone considerable privations in their recent difficult march, in which they must have displayed great endurance. The men had been on greatly reduced rations and the horses, without grain, had been fed on leaves of the scrub-oak, while the force had practically no transport and very little ammunition. Colonel Rowlandson himself arrived on the 3rd April at Baghdad, where he expressed the opinion that the Russians were neither sufficiently organised nor in a fit condition to carry out effective operations against the Turks; and he understood, moreover, that, as General Raddatz considered his mission to be the clearance of the Turks out of Persia, he did

* On the 1st April, ten squadrons and two guns of this force moved to Dekke, the site of the Turkish bridge over the Diyala.

not contemplate any advance beyond the Diyala. On the 4th Colonel Rowlandson left Baghdad to rejoin the Russians, taking with him forty-six lorries loaded with supplies sent by General Maude for the Russian force.*

In coming to the decision to advance to Baghdad and in considering their plans after its capture, the British had relied on the Russian agreement to co-operate by an advance on Mosul and a vigorous offensive by their main Caucasus Army. It is advisable, therefore, at this stage to refer briefly to the reasons why this agreement was not fulfilled and to some effects of this failure.

On the 4th April General Maude telegraphed the gist of Colonel Rowlandson's opinion to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, adding that, as the weather was becoming better, it was of the greatest importance not to delay in striking the Turks further blows; and he trusted that the importance of early and vigorous action might be impressed upon Russian Headquarters. In consequence of this message, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff sent General Alexeieff, Commander-in-Chief of all the Russian armies, the following telegram on the 6th April:—

> "It is with great pleasure that I learn from General Maude of the junction of Russian and British troops in Mesopotamia. I hope Your Excellency will agree with me that the time is propitious for exploiting with the utmost energy the success gained by our troops.
>
> Owing to our lengthy and difficult communications in Mesopotamia, General Maude cannot operate simultaneously on two lines north of Baghdad. It appears, therefore, to me that the British forces should concentrate their efforts against the Turkish troops confronting them on the Tigris, who, according to our information, are likely to be reinforced, and keep them fully occupied, while the Russian forces should endeavour as rapidly as possible to drive back on Mosul the Turkish forces who are now east of the Tigris. The object of our combined operations should be to establish the Russian forces on the Tigris at Mosul, which will greatly shorten the front of the Caucasus Army and place your troops in a favourable position to operate against the right flank of the Turkish line.

* They were fired on heavily near Qizil Ribat by Turkish guns on the Diyala right bank and, having to leave the road, sixteen lorries had to be temporarily abandoned.

Once the Russian forces are established on the Tigris, General Maude's efforts should be transferred to barring the line of the Euphrates to the Turks, as he cannot operate as far north as Mosul.

I should be glad to hear at once whether Your Excellency agrees with these views and to be informed as to the instructions issued to the Russian commanders. Owing to the approach of the hot season, an immediate decision is necessary."

On the 13th April, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff wired to General Maude that, in reply to the above telegram, General Alexeieff had enquired if General Maude could assist the Russian troops with provisions, as, unless he could, movements in Persia of Russian forces must very soon come to an end. Sir William Robertson then went on to say that Chernozuboff had resigned his command as his soldiers and officers had expressed lack of confidence in him; and that, though disturbances which had taken place among Russian troops at Kars and Sarikamish (in Russian Trans-Caucasia) had been settled, it would be some time before discipline could be restored under the new regime. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff continued:—

"It seems to me from Alexeieff's reply and our knowledge of Russian army's condition that you cannot rely on receiving any material assistance from Russians, and you must depend on your own resources in making your plans. I have no anxiety as regards the immediate situation, and, judging from all I hear, the Turkish XVIII Corps is in great difficulties owing to your activity; but you must be prepared eventually for a determined attempt on the part of the Turks to try to re-establish their position in Mesopotamia and to retake Baghdad, and you must reckon on withdrawal of some divisions from the Russian front by the Turks for this purpose. Owing, however, to their difficulties of transport and supply, you should get timely notice of any such concentration; as the enemy would take several weeks, and perhaps months, to effect it in considerable strength. It has been estimated here that he might conceivably in course of time be able, and if Russian pressure in Caucasus should entirely cease, to concentrate and supply on the Tigris as many as 200,000 men.* I would like your opinion from supply point of view as to feasibility of this."

* Of these, it was estimated about 150,000 would be effective combatants.

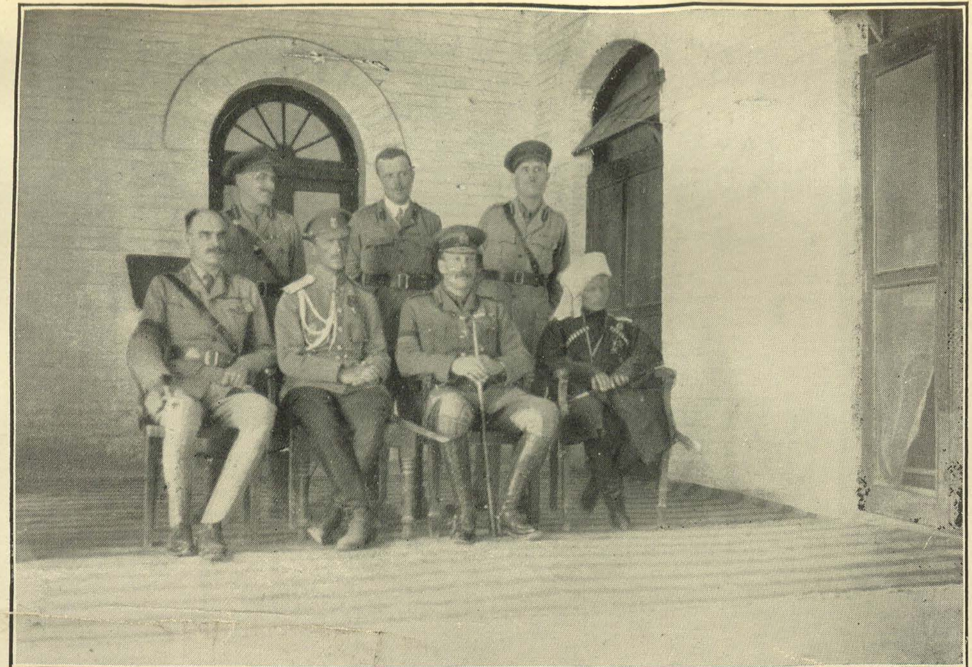
Replying to this telegram on the 15th, General Maude said that he could provide a certain amount of provisions for the Russians, but with difficulty and at the expense of his own reserves; and he thought it wise to assume that the Turks could by efficient management maintain 200,000 men on the Tigris. Next day General Maude reported that General Raddatz's chief staff officer,* then in Baghdad, said that there were only 3,000 Russian troops at and west of Qasr-i-Shirin, that these numbers were unlikely to be increased, and that no instructions for further operations had been received.

Further correspondence ensued between General Maude and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff. But, owing to the effects of the Russian revolution, all efforts to stimulate the Russians to undertake an offensive failed; and on the 23rd April the Chief of the Imperial General Staff informed General Maude that the Russians had abandoned the idea of an advance in force on Mosul and would content themselves with occupying and holding the general line Ruwandiz–Sulaimaniya–Qizil Ribat. In consequence, General Maude's mission was now as defined in the Chief of the Imperial General Staff's telegram of 28th February, namely, to establish British influence in the Baghdad *vilayet*,† the instructions given him on the 9th March to assist the Russians in establishing themselves on the Tigris being no longer applicable.

It is, of course, impossible to say what effect on the campaign a serious Russian offensive at this period would have exerted, but there seems no doubt that General Maude was correct in saying at the time in his letters that a great opportunity had been lost and was not likely to occur again. He expressed the definite opinion that the Turks, who were short of both food and ammunition, were prepared and ready to retreat on Mosul if they were pressed by the Russians; and that the only reason they did not retire was that the Russians made no attempt to advance and limited their activities to half-hearted patrolling. As yet, apparently, the Turks had little idea of the extent of the demoralising influence on the Russian fighting capacity which

* This officer, Colonel Rosgonoff, with another Russian staff officer and the British *liaison* officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Rowlandson, had arrived at Baghdad on the 15th April. They went back three days later to rejoin the Russian forces.

† The boundary of the Baghdad *vilayet* ran from just below Kut roughly north-eastward to the Persian frontier and then along it, to pass westward about twenty miles north of Khaniqin to the Tigris just north of Tikrit: from here it extended to the north of Ana on the Euphrates, where it turned southward, crossing the Euphrates west of Ana and then south-eastward to include the Euphrates districts to within about twenty miles of Nasiriya.



Russian officers at A.H.Q., Baghdad: 18th April, 1917.

Back row (left to right)—Brig.-Gen. H. R. Hopwood; Lieut.-Col. M. G. D. Rowlandson; Brig.-Gen. W. H. Beach.

Sitting—Maj.-Gen. A. W. Money; Colonel Rosgonoff; Lieut.-Gen. F. S. Maude; Captain Tencka.

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the revolution was exercising, though General Maude soon began to realise that his force would have most of the fighting to do unaided.

A further light on the effect of the Russian failure to co-operate is shown by some correspondence which took place at this time between London and India. As a result of General Maude's success and the promised Russian co-operation it was felt that, as the risks to Indian security were much reduced, the Government of India might be able to prepare for a greater military effort to assist in the conduct of the war elsewhere than had hitherto been possible. On the 28th March the Secretary of State for India telegraphed to the Viceroy asking, on the assumption that the war would not be decided till 1918, what additional effort India could make; the most important consideration being what fighting man-power she could produce and train to be fit to put into the field by the early spring of 1918, primarily to relieve British troops in India, Mesopotamia or Egypt, or even for employment in France. Mr. Chamberlain enquired if 100,000 men could be raised for the above objects; and he suggested various methods of doing so, while he emphasised the necessity for exerting the maximum strength of the Empire. He asked for a telegraphic reply, on receipt of which he would ascertain if arms and equipment would be available.

At the time, India had just completed raising sixteen new battalions of infantry, besides other units, and had sent many thousands of men as drivers, followers, labourers, etc., to Mesopotamia, East Africa, Egypt and France, whence demands were still very large and continuous. Moreover, she had great difficulty in obtaining sufficient British officers with the necessary language qualifications, more especially in view of the recent large demands for replacements from Mesopotamia, where during the last three and a half months over a hundred Indian army officers had been killed and many more invalided from wounds and sickness.

On the 7th April, to aid the consideration of this question, the Commander-in-Chief in India telegraphed to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, pointing out what a strain Mesopotamian requirements were on the resources of India, and asking that, if a change of policy in Mesopotamia led to a reduction in the strength of Force "D," he might receive early intimation of it to enable him to re-assess the utilisation of India's resources to the best general advantage. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff replied on the 9th that a change in policy depended on Russia, where the revolution rendered it as yet uncertain

what she could do. Information tended to show that the Turks meant to try and recapture Baghdad, but it was hoped that in the meantime the Russians would take energetic action along their whole front. If the Russians established themselves on the Tigris, General Maude would only have to consider the Euphrates line and a reduction of his force should be possible. This was desirable both for the reasons given by General Monro, from the shipping standpoint and also because any troops that could be spared from Mesopotamia would be very valuable in Palestine, where His Majesty's Government were desirous of pressing the Turks as vigorously as possible.

On the 11th April the Viceroy telegraphed a reply to the Secretary of State for India, saying that India would raise twenty-three more infantry battalions, besides other units; and on the 8th May, when the extent of the Russian demoralisation became clearer, he sent another telegram. In this he said that, owing to the change in the military situation in Mesopotamia which the Russian revolution had brought about, General Maude, with about 50,000 men and 200 guns in the Baghdad area, might have in the future to face some 120,000 Turks with 300 guns. He would probably, therefore, require considerable reinforcements from about September onwards. Consequently, to replace the trained troops which India would then have to send overseas, it was considered prudent to raise the equivalent of two new divisions, i.e., twenty-four instead of twenty-three new battalions and certain divisional troops.

In Turkestan also, where Kuropatkin and other Russian generals had been arrested, the Russian revolution was having a disquieting effect, which might extend outside Russian territory in Asia. The General Staff in India, appreciating the situation, came to the conclusion that India must be prepared to give General Maude all possible assistance in men and material, as the security of the North-West Frontier and the tranquillity of India depended largely on our maintaining our hold on Baghdad.

In regard to Palestine, the General Officer Commanding the Egyptian Expeditionary Force was instructed at the beginning of April that His Majesty's Government was anxious that he should exploit the success already gained to the utmost possible extent and should if possible capture Jerusalem, the occupation of which would bring great moral and political advantages. The second battle of Gaza took place on the 17th–19th April; and, as success was not achieved there, the instructions to advance on Jerusalem were modified, the General Officer Commanding being told instead that he was to take every favourable

opportunity of defeating the Turkish forces opposed to him and to exploit any success gained, with the object of driving the Turks from Palestine as and when this became practicable.

To return to General Maude's operations. On the 1st April his troops, spread over a wide front, were disposed as follows. General Keary with about two-thirds of the 3rd Division was on the Jabal Hamrin, but started withdrawing next day and by the 7th rejoined the Ist Corps on the Tigris right bank near Baghdad. One brigade group (37th) of the 14th Division was at Baquba, another (35th) near Qarara, and the third (36th) was garrisoning Baghdad. The Cavalry and 13th Divisions were about Diltawa. The 7th Division was on the Tigris right bank with its most forward troops near Babi ; and about a third of the 3rd Division was at Falluja.

The Turkish XIII Corps, consisting of the 2nd, 6th and 14th Divisions, numbering some 1,350 sabres, 11,000 rifles and 60 guns, was understood to be falling back gradually on Kifri ; their XVIII Corps, consisting of the 51st and 52nd Divisions, numbering some 500 sabres, 5,600 rifles and 50 guns, was holding the line of the Adhaim with some of its troops on the Tigris right bank about Balad, and others preparing a position at Istabulat on the Tigris, covering Samarra ; and the force on the Euphrates at Ramadi was estimated at 50 sabres, 1,500 rifles and 4 guns.

The operations which General Maude now undertook were intended, in the first place, to assist the Russians to establish themselves on the Tigris ; though it was desirable, for the security of the British position at Baghdad, to occupy the northern end of the Baghdad–Samarra railway and to take any opportunity that offered to crush inferior Turkish forces within striking distance.

Preparations were carried out from the 2nd to the 4th April for an advance towards Samarra, whence the Turks were reported to be evacuating northward large quantities of stores and some guns ; which seemed to indicate that they did not intend to remain there long. News was also received that about 6,000 Turkish troops bound for Mosul had passed through Aleppo in the middle of March, which, taken in conjunction with other information recently received, led to the conclusion that the leading regiments of two new Turkish divisions were likely to reach Samarra about the 4th April, though it was doubtful if the Turks could supply more than one new division below Mosul owing to their supply and transport difficulties.*

* The 181st Regiment reached Samarra on the 6th April, the 166th on the 13th April, and the 180th was reported to be following them closely.

Information was also received from the Russians that the 316th German Infantry, 91st Oldenburg Infantry and 19th Saxon Infantry* had reached Constantinople between the 11th and 18th March, that two of them had already left there for Mesopotamia and that the third was following. It seemed to the British, however, highly improbable that these regiments would leave Constantinople or come to Mesopotamia. At that time, exclusive of personnel on the lines of communication, there were reported to be about 500 Germans with the Turkish Sixth Army, composed mainly of staff, aviators, wireless personnel and two machine gun companies.

In his operation order of the 4th April, General Maude said that the Turkish XIII Corps, strength as given above, was in the area Kifri–Mansuriya: of the XVIII Corps, 500 sabres, 4,300 rifles and 28 guns were along the Adhaim; 200 sabres, 3,200 rifles and 16 guns about Balad, and about 2,200 rifles with 10 guns at Samarra. The strength at Ramadi was unchanged. It was General Maude's intention to concentrate by 10 p.m. next day, about the line Mara–Sumaika, sufficient force to deal with the enemy on the Adhaim and at Balad. Two columns were to be formed, each of rather over a division with a flight of aeroplanes. The column on the Tigris left bank under General Marshall was to concentrate in the area Diltawa–Mara–Sindiya. It consisted of a mounted force commanded by Colonel R. A. Cassels, composed of two squadrons 32nd Lancers (IIIrd Corps Cavalry), 21st Cavalry and one section each from "S" Battery, R.H.A., and D/66th Battery, R F.A.; 13th Division; 134th Howitzer Brigade, R.F.A., 2/104th Battery (60-pounders)† and No. 80 Anti-aircraft Section; a bridging train; and "C" Flight, 30th Squadron, R.F.C. The column on the Tigris right bank under General Fane was to concentrate in the area Sindiya–Sumaika. It consisted of the 7th Division; headquarters and one squadron 32nd Lancers; 2/86th Battery (60-pounders),‡ 13th Light Armoured Motor Battery and No. 93 Anti-aircraft section; No. 2 Bridging Train; and "B" Flight, 30th Squadron, R.F.C.

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* There does not appear to have been a German infantry regiment numbered 316, and the other two regiments named were in France at this time. The German "Asiatic Corps" consisted at this time, it is understood, of only Nos. 701, 702 and 703 Infantry Battalions and a few batteries.

† Excluding anti-aircraft, General Marshall had a total of 58 guns, including 40 belonging to the 13th Division, i.e., 20 belonging to 55th Brigade, R.F.A., including A/69th Howitzer Battery, and 20 to the 66th Brigade, R.F.A., including 72nd Howitzer Battery.

‡ Excluding anti-aircraft, General Fane had a total of 44 guns, including 40 guns with the 7th Division, i.e., 34 belonging to 9th and 56th Brigades, R.F.A., 2 howitzers 524th Battery and 4 howitzers D/69th Battery.

On the 5th April, General Marshall's column concentrated as ordered, a detachment from the 14th Division (2/9th Gurkhas, half 67th Punjabis, 44th Battery, R.F.A., and a section C/69th Howitzer Battery, under Lieutenant-Colonel H. B. Champain, 2/9th Gurkhas), being detailed to take over the local protection of the Abu Tamar–Sindiya line. On the Tigris right bank, though General Fane's advanced troops occupied by nightfall Sumaika and a point on the Tigris opposite Sindiya, the bulk of his force on protective duties between Sindiya and Baghdad still awaited relief by General Keary's troops. General Fane, now under General Maude's direct orders, received instructions that evening to continue his concentration* and to take early steps to ascertain the enemy dispositions about Balad. At the same time the Cavalry Division, whose rôle was to prevent the Turkish XIII Corps (then north of Lambarak–Garfa) detaching troops towards the Adhaim below Satha, was told to move early on the 6th, occupy a position near Delli Abbas and reconnoitre for water towards Garfa.

On the 6th April the Cavalry Division found that Delli Abbas was occupied by the enemy, but was unable to reach Garfa owing to Arab opposition and the absence of water. At night the 7th Cavalry Brigade bivouacked six miles westward of Delli Abbas, with the remainder of the division five miles to its south-west. General Marshall's column remained stationary; and from information obtained during the day it looked as if the Turks on the Adhaim were falling back towards Samarra. General Fane's column continued its concentration, some of its patrols gaining contact with the Turks about a mile southward of Balad railway station, where their outpost line seemed to be covering a position at Harba.

For some days the Arabs on the Euphrates, acting apparently under Turkish instigation, had been somewhat aggressive in the neighbourhood of Falluja; and on the 5th April they attacked, in some strength, a post which we had established two days previously at Radwaniya, nine miles below Falluja.† This attack, however, was beaten off without much difficulty. About this period, also, considerable fighting—invariably in our favour—took place with Arabs in the Shaikh Saad–Sinn area, where the light railway was being taken up to be transported upstream for use from Baghdad to Baquba and other outlying posts. The Tigris was rising steadily, but only by small

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* Owing to the heat in the day-time, he was told not to press his men unduly.

† We also established, on the 4th April, a post at Mufraz, the Euphrates terminus of the Baghdad Decauville railway.

amounts daily, which looked as if there were to be no very high floods; and this was satisfactory, especially as General Maude was a little anxious in regard to his communications with the Euphrates owing to the Sakhlawiya floods. Another source of satisfaction was the daily number of Turkish deserters, varying from ten to twenty, which tended to show that their men were getting tired of fighting and that their *moral* was low.

During the night 6th–7th April, General Marshall's column moved forward, reaching a point about a mile north of Duqma, and was reinforced there on the 7th by the 35th Infantry Brigade (less two battalions). During the 7th, Colonel Cassels' cavalry, driving some enemy troops across the Adhaim, pushed up to the line of that river, where they were relieved in the evening by the 40th Infantry Brigade. The enemy was then reported to be holding a ridge about one thousand yards westward of the Adhaim. The Cavalry Division ascertained in the course of the day that Delli Abbas was held by enemy cavalry only, that there were no signs of any enemy about Garfa, where no water could be found; and by nightfall the bulk of General Fane's column had closed up on Sumaika.

In his operation order, issued at 4.30 p.m., General Maude said that he intended to advance to the line Adhaim–Balad station. The Cavalry Division, reinforced by an infantry battalion and a machine gun section, was to hold the vicinity of Delli Abbas strongly and prevent movement by the enemy south of the line Lambarak–Delli Abbas–Garfa; General Marshall was to drive the enemy across the Adhaim, but was not to advance beyond that river; and General Fane, when his force was sufficiently concentrated, was to secure a line about Balad station.

On the morning of the 8th, however, General Maude received information that the Turkish XIII Corps was advancing. He accordingly issued instructions that, while General Fane was to act offensively against the enemy at Harba, General Marshall, under whose orders the Cavalry Division was now placed, was to remain temporarily in observation of the lower reaches of the Adhaim and dispose his troops to deal with any south-westerly or westerly movement by the Turkish XIII Corps.

At 5 a.m. on the 8th April (Easter Day),* a detachment† from General Fane's column, under command of General Davies,

* Sunrise was about 5.40 a.m.

† Squadron 32nd Lancers, 28th Infantry Brigade, 9th Brigade, R.F.A. (less one battery), Section 524th Howitzer Battery, 13th Light Armoured Motor Battery, and half a sapper and miner company.

moved forward from Sumaika to occupy Balad station, where the enemy was reported to be in less strength than at Harba, his main position. The 53rd Sikhs in advanced guard came under hostile gun fire when about 5,000 yards from Balad station, immediately south of which the enemy was holding an extended line of interrupted trenches astride the railway, his right being covered by the Dujail canal, a considerable obstacle full of water which ran roughly parallel to the railway at an average distance from it of three-quarters of a mile. On each side of the railway the country was flat and open with a few small irrigation cuts ; but half a mile east of the railway and roughly parallel to it lay a strip of broken and undulating ground.

After a pause for reconnaissance the 53rd was ordered at 10.15 a.m. to push on, the 2nd Leicestershire and 51st Sikhs moving in support behind its left and right respectively. The 53rd advanced on the east of the railway, with a company on the right flank moving along the strip of broken ground ; the Leicestershire moved with a company on each side of the railway, their two remaining companies being pushed out further west to facilitate a turning movement ; and the 51st Sikhs advanced up the strip of broken ground.

As the 53rd advanced, most of the enemy guns seemed to move farther back, but by about 1 p.m., as it approached the hostile trench line, the whole of the 53rd line was gradually checked by rifle and machine gun fire, the company on the right being faced by a low hill from which the enemy enfiladed the direct advance on the railway station. The advance of the Leicestershire, who had encountered opposition, especially from mounds bordering the Dujail canal, was also checked soon after this. But the 51st, making skilful use of the broken ground—an advantage to which they were unaccustomed in Mesopotamia—pushed forward with the effective support of our artillery (which kept down the fire of a battery on the enemy's left) and, with the right company of the 53rd, assaulted and captured the low hill which had hitherto stopped the latter, taking twenty-six prisoners. Taking advantage of this breach in the enemy's line, the 51st and the right company of the 53rd pushed forward vigorously, with the result that the enemy began a general retirement. The troops on his left got away through the broken ground, but that portion of his line in front of the railway station, being without communication trenches, was generally held by the fire of the 53rd and Leicestershire ; so that the 51st and 53rd, pressing round the enemy's flank and rear, surrounded and captured many of his men.

By about 2.30 p.m. Balad station was in our hands. Our troops pressed on and occupied a low ridge about a mile north of the station, where outposts were placed; and this position the enemy guns continued to shell till dusk, but with little result. By nightfall the bulk of General Fane's column had moved up to the vicinity of Balad station.

The Turkish force opposed to us appears to have consisted of the 9th Regiment, supported by the 7th Regiment, both of the 51st Division, with a probable strength of between 1,500 and 2,000 rifles with six to ten guns. With the loss of only 56 casualties ourselves, we captured three machine guns, about 200 prisoners and some thirty railway trucks.*

Next morning (9th) General Fane's column occupied Harba without opposition. The enemy's 51st Division, strength about 200 sabres, 3,000 rifles and 16 guns, had retired and was reported to be holding the entrenchments at Istabulat, about seven miles north-west of Harba.

The Cavalry Division maintained during the 8th April a close watch for any enemy movement across the line Delli Abbas–Garfa; and in the afternoon detached the 22nd Cavalry to watch for and delay any enemy movement from Delli Abbas on the east side of the Khalis canal. General Marshall's column was mainly employed in carrying out close reconnaissance of the lower reaches of the Adhaim with a view to bridging it; and General Marshall suggested to General Maude that he should cross the Adhaim that night to deal with the Turkish force on its right bank. But at 3.40 p.m. General Maude replied dissenting. He said that the latest indications showed that the Turkish XIII Corps, less the detachment opposing the Russians, would move forward that evening or next morning on both sides of the Khalis canal towards Diltawa to relieve the pressure on the Adhaim, which the enemy apparently meant to hold. It would, therefore, be premature to cross the Adhaim, though possibly desirable to do so after General Marshall had dealt with the XIII Corps and General Fane with the 51st Division. The fact that the XIII Corps would advance on both sides of the Khalis canal would give General Marshall an exceptional opportunity for dealing it a heavy blow.

At 5 p.m. General Marshall issued orders that the Cavalry

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* These were in due course used by harnessing mules to them, and helped to ease the supply situation. The Turks had taken away all the locomotives, but General Maude had been promised six goods engines from England and thirty trucks from Egypt to enable him to make use of the railway.

Division was to continue its watch next day, reporting all hostile movements towards the south and south-west, and was also to bridge the Khalis canal at suitable points. Colonel Cassels' cavalry force was to reconnoitre routes from the camp at Duqma towards the Khalis canal ; and the 13th Division was to maintain contact with the enemy on the Adhaim. At 11 p.m. General Maude telegraphed to General Marshall that latest information continued to indicate that the Turkish XIII Corps would begin to advance from its present positions towards Diltawa, on both sides of the Khalis canal, before daybreak and might be expected to reach during the 9th a point about eight miles west of Delli Abbas.

On the 9th April, about 6.30 a.m., Cavalry Division patrols observed Turkish infantry in considerable strength taking up positions north and north-west of Delli Abbas and, a little later, a hostile force of about two battalions advancing in a south-westerly direction. The 7th Cavalry Brigade, supported by "S" and "V" Batteries and ordered to delay the enemy's advance without getting itself too closely involved, was attacked about 10 a.m. by a considerable force of enemy infantry with some 500 to 600 cavalry advancing on its right and supported by about eight guns. Moving forward on a front of at least three miles, a great part of the hostile infantry was in close formation, thus affording our guns excellent targets of which they took advantage with apparently good effect. But the enemy continued to advance ; and at about 10.30 a.m., when they threatened to outflank our line and were about 1,200 yards from our guns, the 7th Cavalry Brigade began to withdraw. Taking up a series of positions, our cavalry delayed the enemy's advance considerably until it came to an end about 12 noon. The Turks then consolidated the line they had reached. This ran roughly east and west through Serai, about three and a half miles west-north-west of Tijdari (see Map 30). Remaining in contact with this line for the rest of the day, the Cavalry Division withdrew some nine miles at dusk and bivouacked on a line astride the Delli Abbas–Diltawa road, with the 1/2nd Gurkhas* holding a line on their right extending to the mosque of Shaikh Muhammad Ibn Ali. On the east side of the Khalis and Tawila canals† the 22nd Cavalry had only encountered enemy patrols.

* This battalion had joined the Cavalry Division during the day.

† The wide Khalis canal was only full of water as far south as its junction, near Arab-bu-Abin, with the Tawila canal, whence onwards it was dry. The Tawila was about forty feet wide and full of water, and in the war diaries of this period was often called in error the Khalis.

Hearing about 11.0 a.m. on the 9th April from the Cavalry Division that considerable enemy forces were advancing, General Marshall had ordered the 35th Brigade (less two battalions) with a section of 60-pounders to march at once to Diltawa. About half an hour later he received an aeroplane report, timed 10.20 a.m., of a column of some 5,000 hostile infantry, with its head westward of Abdulla Afandi, advancing south-westward along the road parallel to the light railway. This meant that an enemy force was well to the south of the Cavalry Division, and General Marshall, although doubtful as to the correctness of the information, directed Colonel Cassels to move out with his cavalry in that direction, at the same time warning Colonel Champain at Sindiya and the garrison commander at Baquba. In point of fact, the enemy had not advanced so far, and General Marshall ascertained at 2.25 p.m. from another air reconnaissance that the supply and transport column of our Cavalry Division had been mistaken for the enemy.

In an operation order issued at 12.35 p.m., General Maude said that the 2nd and 14th Turkish Divisions, numbering 250 sabres, 6,000 rifles and 32 guns, were advancing on both banks* of the Khalis canal from the direction of Lambarak and Delli Abbas towards Diltawa. The 52nd Turkish Division, strength 300 sabres, 4,300 rifles and 28 guns, on the Tigris left bank was west of the Adhaim. Prior to operating against the 52nd Division General Maude intended to deal vigorously with the 2nd and 14th Divisions. General Marshall was to make secure the line Baquba–Sindiya and deal effectively with the advancing enemy, full advantage being taken of our position on interior lines for striking the enemy a heavy blow.

In pursuance of these instructions, General Marshall issued orders in the evening of the 9th April to the Cavalry Division to maintain contact with the enemy during the night, watching especially for any hostile movement to the westward, and to continue next day, by vigorous action on both sides of the Khalis canal, to oppose the enemy's advance.† Colonel Cassels' cavalry brigade was to bivouac for the night on the

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* This was not the case. The Turks advanced on the western side of the Khalis, where the country was bare, waterless and flat. On the eastern side up to the Diyala river, the country was much intersected by canals and water channels, and interspersed with villages and palm groves, i.e., difficult for military movement.

† The cavalry regiments at this time were very weak in strength, averaging about 200 effective sabres each : and " V " Battery, R.H.A., was reduced to a strength of four guns.

Khalis canal in rear of the Cavalry Division and to move at 6 a.m. next day to some ruins three miles east of Duqma ; while the troops at Duqma camp and on the Adhaim were to be ready to move at short notice.

General Thomson with his weak 35th Brigade reached Abu Tamar about 5 p.m. on the 9th, where he took over command of Colonel Champain's detachment and was joined after dark by a field battery from Baquba. With this force of three and a half battalions and sixteen guns* he held for the night a line from Muhurar to Sindiya.

At 6.40 a.m. on the 10th April, General Maude informed General Marshall that no further information of the enemy's intentions had been received. General Marshall was to arrange to act vigorously, with as strong a force as possible, against the enemy between Delli Abbas and Diltawa, possibly feinting boldly at the same time at crossing the Adhaim. At 8.20 a.m., however, General Maude sent General Marshall a further message saying that reliable information had then been received that the Turkish 2nd and 14th Divisions, consisting of fifteen battalions and seven batteries—say 6,000 rifles and 28 guns—were to continue that day their advance towards Diltawa. As it seemed probable that the Turks had weakened their force on the Adhaim in order to reinforce their troops opposing General Fane on the right bank of the Tigris, very few troops, if actively handled, should suffice to keep up the delusion that the British intended to cross the Adhaim. General Marshall should, therefore, be able to concentrate maximum numbers against the Turkish XIII Corps. At 10.5 a.m. General Maude issued an operation order saying that it was his intention to attack and deal decisively with the Turkish 2nd and 14th Divisions as a preliminary step to further operations northward. General Marshall's column was to act offensively, while General Fane's column remained temporarily on the defensive about Harba.†

The Turkish 2nd and 14th Divisions were found early on the 10th, by the Cavalry Division, to be still occupying their previous day's position, and during the day they made little appreciable movement. It seems clear that Generals Maude

* 1/5th Buffs and 37th Dogras of 35th Brigade, 2/9th Gurkhas and half 67th Punjabis of 37th Brigade, 8th and 44th Field Batteries, and one section each 2/104th and C/69th Batteries.

† Until we crossed the Adhaim and occupied the left bank of the Tigris a few miles beyond it, it was impossible to supply General Fane's force by river if it proceeded beyond Harba : and there was insufficient transport to feed it by land.

and Marshall had hoped to entice the Turks down to near Diltawa so as to strike them in flank from the direction of the Adhaim. But as by midday on the 10th it appeared that they did not intend to advance much further, General Marshall made the following arrangements that afternoon to carry out an attack on them at dawn on the 11th. General O'Dowda with a brigade group* was to hold the Duqma camp and the existing line along the Adhaim. General Cayley with a force of five squadrons of cavalry, nine battalions of infantry and forty-eight guns† was to march from Duqma not earlier than 10 p.m. to attack and destroy the 2nd and 14th Turkish Divisions. The Cavalry Division was to maintain contact with the enemy on his front and flanks throughout the night, it being General Marshall's intention to withdraw the Cavalry Division to the south-west, when General Cayley attacked, and concentrate it for an enveloping movement.‡ General Thomson's force was to hold up any hostile attack which the Cavalry Division was unable to check, until General Cayley struck it in flank, when General Thomson was to co-operate offensively, especially to the south of the Khalis canal. During the night General Marshall would move his column headquarters from Duqma to Sindiya.

During the 10th April General Thomson was reinforced from Baquba by the 2/4th Gurkhas, who came up on the right of his line between Muhurar and the Diyala.

At dusk the Cavalry Division (including 1/2nd Gurkhas) withdrew, hoping to induce the Turkish XIII Corps to make a further advance, and took up a line (about two miles southward of the position it had occupied the previous night) extending north-westward from Abdulla Afandi; the Gurkhas being on the right of the line. During the night 10th–11th our patrols observed no signs of enemy movement.

General Cayley's column, leaving Duqma at 10 p.m. on the 10th, reached about 5 a.m. on the 11th April, after a night march of some eleven or twelve miles,§ a point on the light railway five and a half miles west of Chaliya, where a staff

* One squadron 21st Cavalry, 38th Infantry Brigade (strength 1,500 rifles), A/69th and B/55th Batteries, R.F.A., No. 80 Anti-aircraft Section and the bridging unit.

† Colonel Cassels' Cavalry Brigade, 13th Division (strength 4,300 rifles, excluding the units under General O'Dowda), and IIIrd Corps Artillery (134th Howitzer Brigade and one section 2/104th Battery).

‡ This intention does not appear to have been communicated to the Cavalry Division or to General Cayley until 9.15 a.m. next day.

§ The night march traversed partially unreconnoitred country; and there were considerable delays owing to broken ground.

officer arrived from the Cavalry Division and gave General Cayley the latest information of the general situation. This was to the effect that there were no signs of any forward move by the Turks. General Cayley therefore halted the bulk of his troops for rest and food, while Colonel Cassels' cavalry reconnoitred to the front.

At 5 a.m. the 6th Cavalry Brigade (consisting only of the 14th Hussars* and four guns of " S " Battery), supported by the remainder of the Cavalry Division, moved forward up the western bank of the Khalis canal. About 5.30 a.m., sighting General Cayley's infantry to the west, the general commanding the 6th Cavalry Brigade, unaware of General Marshall's intention to withdraw the Cavalry Division when General Cayley attacked, sent over to ascertain the infantry orders; and these he received about two hours later. A large body of Turkish infantry was now seen by the 6th Cavalry Brigade moving south-west in column along the Delli Abbas–Diltawa road, with only a small body of cavalry in front of it. As the Turks would have to deploy half-right to meet General Cayley's infantry, General Holland-Pryor ordered " S " Battery forward to check the head of the Turkish column. At the same time he pushed forward with his brigade between the Turks and the Khalis canal so as to be prepared to make a mounted attack on the hostile artillery or on their infantry supports or reserves when they deployed to meet General Cayley's infantry. About the same time the 7th Cavalry Brigade and " V " Battery moved up into action to the westward of " S " Battery.

But the enemy, with his guns well up, came on rapidly and the 6th Cavalry Brigade was forced to retire, the movement being covered by the 7th Cavalry Brigade and " V " Battery. Our guns got excellent targets and appeared to have considerable effect on the enemy, who continued, however, to advance resolutely under cover of heavy fire from their own guns, which pushed well forward. The Cavalry Division was gradually driven back, and by 10 a.m. had reached the line running north-west from Abdulla Afandi, which it had occupied during the night, while the Turkish left had reached Shaikh Muhammad Ibn Ali.

In the meantime, although at 6.30 a.m. he received an aeroplane report that the enemy was retiring, General Cayley learnt before 8 a.m. from the Cavalry Division that the Turks were advancing in strength. He ordered Colonel Cassels'

* The 21st Cavalry were with Colonel Cassels and the 22nd Cavalry were on the east side of the Khalis-Tawila canals.

Brigade forward at once to occupy a line of mounds which was about three and a half miles west of Chaliya and to the left of the Cavalry Division and to hold this position till the arrival of the 40th Infantry Brigade. This brigade, with the 66th Field Artillery Brigade, began its advance from the railway line at 8.30 a.m. and, covering the two intervening miles in about an hour, its two battalions in front line (8th Cheshire and 8th Royal Welch Fusiliers) reached the vicinity of the line of mounds as Colonel Cassels' cavalry withdrew from it in face of the lines of advancing Turkish infantry, among whom Colonel Cassels' guns appear to have done considerable execution. The 39th Infantry Brigade was following the 40th in echelon to the left with a view to attacking the enemy's right. By about 10 a.m. the 40th Infantry Brigade, just forestalling the Turkish infantry, occupied the line of mounds. Assisted by the very effective fire of the 66th Field Artillery Brigade, which came into action at a range of 1,250 yards, the 40th Brigade stopped and then drove back the enemy right, which was evidently taken by complete surprise. The Turkish left, pressing forward against our Cavalry Division, continued to advance for a short distance but, owing to our movement against their right, came to a halt about Shaikh Muhammad Ibn Ali.

Apparently the only recent information of the situation which had reached General Marshall before this was an aeroplane report, which he received about 8.45 a.m. This said that the Turks, faced by our Cavalry Division about two miles distant, were entrenching a line running north-north-west to the road from Arab-bu-Abin, against the right of which General Cayley's force was advancing, but from which his leading troops were then five miles off. At 9.15 a.m. General Marshall telegraphed to the Cavalry Division, General Cayley, and General Thomson that, as soon as General Cayley's attack developed, the Cavalry Division was to withdraw from the enemy's front leaving there the 1/2nd Gurkhas in contact with the enemy under General Cayley's orders. The Cavalry Division was then to make a wide turning movement by the north and operate against the enemy's right rear with the object of enveloping him and preventing his retreat via Delli Abbas. General Cayley was to intimate to the Cavalry Division when to commence its withdrawal.

The 1/2nd Gurkhas were ordered to take up a line with their right on the dry bed of the Khalis canal on the left of the Cavalry Division; and this left a gap of about two miles between the Gurkhas and the right of the 40th Brigade.

Meanwhile Colonel Cassels' Cavalry Brigade had withdrawn to the left of the 39th Brigade, which had continued its advance in a turning movement against the enemy's right flank. Before this movement the hostile infantry began to fall back in considerable numbers, but, as the leading lines of the 39th Brigade got within about eight hundred yards of the enemy, orders were received from General Cayley that the brigade was not to get heavily engaged. The commander of the 39th Brigade consequently ordered his troops to halt and brought his machine gun company into action against very good targets somewhat marred by the mirage.

The situation at about 10.30 a.m., as it presented itself to General Cayley, was as follows. At the moment he was not in cable communication either with IIIrd Corps headquarters* or with General Thomson on the Sindiya–Diltawa line ; nor was he in close touch with the Cavalry Division. He had not received General Marshall's order regarding the withdrawal of the Cavalry Division to operate round the western flank. He had just received a report from the Cavalry Division that hostile cavalry and three Turkish infantry battalions were moving down the east side of the Khalis canal to attack the right of our cavalry ; and when he saw the Cavalry Division withdrawing he came to the conclusion that it had been pushed back. Moreover, General Cayley was also apprehensive of Turkish attack from the direction of the Adhaim against his left flank.

General Cayley, after making a personal reconnaissance under heavy fire, decided that the 39th Brigade should not push home its attack (in spite of the protests of his brigade commanders and of Colonel Cassels), evidently considering it necessary, before continuing his attack, to secure the line between the 1/2nd Gurkhas and the 40th Brigade in order to prevent a Turkish advance against his right.† At about 11.15 a.m., General Andrus, commanding 39th Brigade, received orders to detach the 9th Worcestershire to join the 40th Brigade and to withdraw the remainder of the 39th Brigade to concentrate near General Cayley's headquarters on the road, south of the 40th Brigade, about three and a half miles north-east of

* General Marshall had established his headquarters centrally at Sindiya, and there was insufficient cable to join him up both with General O'Dowda on the Adhaim and with General Cayley's headquarters. General Marshall could scarcely believe that the Turks would be so bold as to advance down the Khalis canal in strength, and he anticipated a Turkish counter-attack against General O'Dowda on the Adhaim : otherwise he would have been with General Cayley.

† For this reason also the Cavalry Division could not be withdrawn altogether, although they do not appear to have done much fighting after 10 a.m.

Abu Tamar. This withdrawal was effected, not without some loss, by about midday, and in the meantime General Cayley had ordered the 40th Brigade to move a battalion out to prolong its right towards the 1/2nd Gurkhas and then the 8th Welch Pioneers to prolong the left of the Gurkhas towards the 40th Brigade, the Cavalry Division being still on the right of the Gurkhas. About 12.30 p.m., General Andrus was ordered to send another battalion (7th North Staffordshire) to join the 40th Brigade, the remainder of the 39th Brigade forming Divisional Reserve.

At 11.40 a.m. General Thomson, commanding the troops holding the defensive line Diyala–Abu Tamar–Sindiya, received the following order sent half an hour earlier by General Marshall and repeated to General Cayley and the Cavalry Division :—

> " Enemy is apparently standing to fight on Arab-bu-Abin position. Cayley's force is attacking his right centre and holding him in front with Cassels' Brigade and 1/2nd Gurkhas, while Cavalry Division withdraws to move round his right and rear. Enemy is trying to work round both Cayley's flanks. You will move up line of Khalis canal with all available artillery and infantry at once, reporting for orders at Cayley's headquarters about four miles north-east of Abu Tamar. It seems desirable that about one battalion should move up south side of Khalis canal."*

General Thomson started with four battalions and sixteen guns† about an hour later, moving on a broad front on both sides of the Tawila canal, but with only the 2/4th Gurkhas and the 8th Field Battery to the east of it.

Since 10 a.m. the Turks had made no attempt to advance ; and General Cayley's force, holding by 1 p.m. a practically continuous line over four miles in length, also remained stationary and dug itself in. The mirage was very bad, the two aeroplanes which had been assisting earlier in the morning were unable to continue reconnaissance owing to the great heat, and General Cayley did not realise that the enemy was in a position almost destitute of cover. The heat proved also very exhausting to his men, especially to the infantry of the 13th Division, who were still wearing their thick serge clothing, were short of

* It is noteworthy that General Marshall had by this time not heard of the actual position held by the Turks, nor of the changes which General Cayley had made in his dispositions : and that in speaking of the Khalis canal he evidently meant the Tawila canal.

† 1/5th Buffs, 37th Dogras, 2/4th and 2/9th Gurkhas : 8th, 44th and one section C/69th Field Batteries and one section 2/104th Battery.

water, and among whom during the day there were about fifty cases of heat-stroke. The enemy infantry opposite had withdrawn to some distance by this time and, though there was a good deal of long range rifle fire, the fighting had resolved itself mainly into an artillery duel.

General Thomson reached General Cayley's headquarters about 3 p.m., and an hour later the latter issued orders for General Thomson to advance at 4.30 p.m. against the enemy's left flank, taking the 1/2nd Gurkhas with him. The Cavalry Division was asked to guard General Thomson's right flank and the 40th Brigade was to co-operate with his attack, seizing any opportunity to gain ground. With the 2/4th Gurkhas on the east side of the Tawila canal in touch with the right of the firing line (37th Dogras and 2/9th Gurkhas in this order from the right) on the west side, General Thomson began his advance at 4.30 p.m. The enemy offered very slight opposition and as darkness came on, between 6.0 and 7.0 p.m., General Thomson's troops took up an outpost line with their left at Shaikh Muhammad Ibn Ali. After dark the 22nd Cavalry on the east of the Tawila joined the 2/4th Gurkhas, with whom the 8th Field Battery had been unable, owing to the difficult country, to remain and had had to move in the right rear on the Baquba–Delli Abbas road. The 40th Brigade had not advanced, and at 9 p.m. General Cayley ordered his force to consolidate its positions, to make no further advance and to carry out reconnaissances during the night. As a result of the latter the British ascertained that the Turks had withdrawn.

During the 11th April the British casualties totalled 264, but those of the Turks must have amounted to about four times that number. Over 300 Turkish corpses were counted next day and an abandoned gun found, and it was clear that our artillery fire had been most effective.

At 6 a.m. on the 12th April a cavalry patrol reported the Turks to be in position between Bint al Hassan and the Delli Abbas road, large numbers of enemy infantry being seen with cavalry patrols close to them.

Receiving orders at 7.30 a.m. to pursue, the Cavalry Division moved forward half an hour later, when its reconnaissance and that by aeroplanes confirmed the report that the Turks were holding a position running north-westward from Bint al Hassan to the road, with their right flank running north and south between the road and the railway. The day was again very hot and oppressive, and General Cayley's infantry were very tired; it was difficult to locate the enemy's position on

the inaccurate maps available ;* and it was decided to make a full reconnaissance and commence the attack in the afternoon.

At 1.30 p.m. General Cayley issued orders for the advance to commence at 3 p.m. with the 35th Brigade on the right, the 40th on the left and the 39th Brigade in reserve. The artillery was to be disposed so as to bring every available gun into action as soon as the enemy's position was definitely located; and Colonel Cassels' brigade was to cover the left flank.

The 35th Brigade, which had been joined the previous evening by the 102nd Grenadiers and with the 1/2nd Gurkhas still with it, started to advance at 3 p.m. with its right on the Tawila canal, the advance of the 40th Brigade on its left being somewhat delayed owing to the time required to concentrate its extended line. On the east side of the canal the 2/4th Gurkhas were sent to escort the 8th Field Battery on the Baquba–Delli Abbas road.† About 6 p.m., having advanced for some distance over rough ground intersected by water channels, the 35th Brigade reached the junction of the Khalis and Tawila canals. Both 35th and 40th Brigades then began to come under hostile gun fire. Our artillery came into action against these guns and our infantry continued to advance till dark,‡ when they halted, their advanced line extending northwestward from a point on the Khalis canal about 1½ miles short of Bint al Hassan. Throughout the day the heat had proved very trying.

At 8.20 p.m. General Cayley issued orders for the advance to continue next morning at 5.30 a.m. During the night 12th/13th the 5th Wiltshire and 4th South Wales Borderers, forming the first line of the 40th Brigade, moved forward about one thousand yards and dug themselves in, the 55th Field Artillery Brigade also advancing and digging in five hundred yards in rear of these two battalions.

At 5.30 a.m. on the 13th April, the 35th Brigade, its right on the Khalis canal, began its advance with the 1/5th Buffs and 102nd Grenadiers in first line; but its progress was very slow, its patrols being checked near Bint al Hassan. On the east bank of the Khalis canal, a company of the Buffs moved to keep touch with the 2/4th Gurkhas, which with the 22nd Cavalry and 8th Field Battery were placed under command of Colonel Henslowe (22nd Cavalry) with orders from General

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* Aerial photography was being carried out to the fullest possible extent to remedy the inaccuracy of the available maps.

† They did not reach the battery till about 9.30 p.m.

‡ Sunset was about 6.20 p.m.

Marshall to push up the east bank keeping touch with General Cayley's force through whom further orders would be sent. The 40th Brigade, its first line under heavy shell fire, made no advance during the morning, which was again very hot; and as water could not be sent up to it over the flat open plain, its men in the first line suffered greatly from thirst and the heat. Colonel Cassels' Cavalry Brigade covered the left of the 40th Brigade; and at 6.45 a.m., the Cavalry Division received orders from General Marshall, who was at Sindiya, to move round the left flank of General Cayley's force and act vigorously against the enemy's right.

Gaining touch with Colonel Cassels' cavalry near the light railway at 10 a.m., the Cavalry Division advanced northward and forced the enemy to extend and throw back his right flank. This movement reduced to some extent the opposition in front of General Cayley's infantry; but the cavalry could not reach the enemy's extreme right, which extended into the foothills of the Jabal Hamrin. In the meantime the Buffs and 102nd Grenadiers, well supported by artillery, pushed forward, and carried, at about 11.45 a.m., the Turkish advanced position in front of Bint al Hassan, taking some forty prisoners. Owing to the heat, however, it was then found necessary for the 35th Brigade to give its men a rest.

About 3.30 p.m. the Welch Fusiliers on the 40th Brigade right pushed forward for about one thousand yards and dug themselves in; and the 35th Brigade also advanced a short distance, in face of considerable rifle, machine gun and gun fire. By nightfall, the advanced British line was dug in at a distance of twelve to seventeen hundred yards from the Turkish main position, the 35th Brigade right being at Bint al Hassan. During the day the Turks had made good use of their artillery, its fire being accurate and at times very rapid; and our artillery fire in support of our infantry had been close and fairly effective. But the mirage had minimised the effect of the fire of both sides; and the British had not been able to take full advantage of their superiority in artillery owing to the lack of observation by aeroplanes, whose engines failed to run properly in the great heat. After dark the British cavalry moved back to bivouac behind the infantry.

During the 13th April we captured over eighty prisoners, but the enemy had maintained his position. The British killed and wounded totalled 191 and there were a number of casualties from heat-stroke. At 7.10 p.m., following instructions from General Maude, General Marshall issued orders that

operations were to be continued with the object of striking a heavy blow against the hard-pressed enemy, whose strength was estimated at 300 sabres, 7,000 rifles and 35 guns and who was known to be short of ammunition.

At dawn on the 14th April the enemy was found to be still in his previous position, which was naturally very strong with a good field of fire. Owing to this, to the great heat and the exhaustion of the troops, it was considered inadvisable to attack by day; and, until dark, operations were limited to cavalry action against the Turkish right flank, artillery fire and consolidation of the infantry positions.

At 8.30 a.m. General Maude informed General Marshall of reliable reports indicating that the Turkish XIII Corps had on the previous day changed its intention of retiring, probably considering that it had checked our advance, and had decided to hold on to its position, apparently to get its wounded away. It was probable, however, that it would retire into the Jabal Hamrin during the night 14th/15th. At 11.40 a.m. General Maude issued an operation order stating that it was his intention to dispose of the Turkish XIII Corps and then, leaving a strong containing force in the area Delli Abbas–Tijdari, to effect a crossing of the Adhaim so as to facilitate the supply of General Fane's column, which would by then be moving on Istabulat. General Marshall's column was to continue to drive the enemy back into the Jabal Hamrin, but not to pursue him beyond the foothills. Full advantage was to be taken of our superiority in guns and gun ammunition, of which latter the enemy was known to be very short. All preliminary measures possible for crossing the Adhaim should be carried out simultaneously, so that no avoidable delay might ensue when the Turkish XIII Corps had been disposed of.

In accordance with these instructions, General Marshall issued orders at 4.10 p.m. for pressure to be maintained on the Turkish XIII Corps. But he represented to General Maude at the same time that it would be impossible, without incurring heavy casualites, to drive the enemy out of his present strong position and that it would be very difficult to supply a large British force at Tijdari. General Marshall did not think that, with a British striking force at Duqma able to act quickly against their flank, the Turks would again attempt a movement against our Sindiya–Diltawa line. He proposed, therefore, that if the Turkish XIII Corps retired that night, our troops should advance and occupy their position, but should not attempt a further pursuit. If, on the other hand, the Turks

did not retire, he proposed that a rear guard should be left in observation and the remainder of the force be withdrawn, partly to the Adhaim and partly to the partially prepared strong defensive line Baquba–Abu Tamar–Sindiya.

Discovering between dusk and 10 p.m. that the Turks had withdrawn from their front trenches, first the 35th and then the 39th Brigades* occupied them ; and at 11.30 p.m. General Cayley issued orders for pursuit. The 35th Brigade with Colonel Cassels' cavalry and some artillery were to form advanced guard and move off at 1 a.m. up the main Delli Abbas road. The bulk of General Cayley's force was to follow at 5 a.m. ; at 6 a.m. the Cavalry Division was to advance on the left flank ; and Colonel Henslowe's detachment, on the right flank east of the Khalis canal, was to move forward and secure the crossings over that canal at Delli Abbas.

Before commencing its advance along the Delli Abbas road, the 35th Brigade had to move from the right to the left of the British line over broken country. Owing to the darkness, the wide dispersion of the troops and the distances to be traversed, this took a considerable time ; and the 35th Brigade could not begin its advance along the road until about 4 a.m. on the 15th April. It was joined at 6.15 a.m. by Colonel Cassels' cavalry, which sent patrols forward towards Delli Abbas. There were no signs of the enemy except for a few stragglers who surrendered.

At 8 a.m. General Maude telegraphed to General Marshall to discontinue the pursuit unless the enemy retreat was reported to be unduly slow, as it was undesirable to get involved in fighting in the hills. About 9.30 a.m., learning from an aeroplane report that the enemy was entrenching a position in the foothills north-west of Delli Abbas, General Cayley issued orders for the pursuit to cease. These orders reached the 35th Brigade just before 10 a.m., when it was about four miles north-west of Delli Abbas ; and an hour and a half later it was ordered to close on General Cayley's main force, which was bivouacking about four miles north of Seraijik. The Cavalry Division received orders at 11.30 a.m. to move to the nearest water ; and, after feeding, it moved to bivouac on the Khalis canal about a mile to the north-east of Bint al Hassan. On the east of the Khalis canal, Colonel Henslowe's detachment advanced to within three miles of Delli Abbas, which was found by patrols to be still held by the enemy ; and

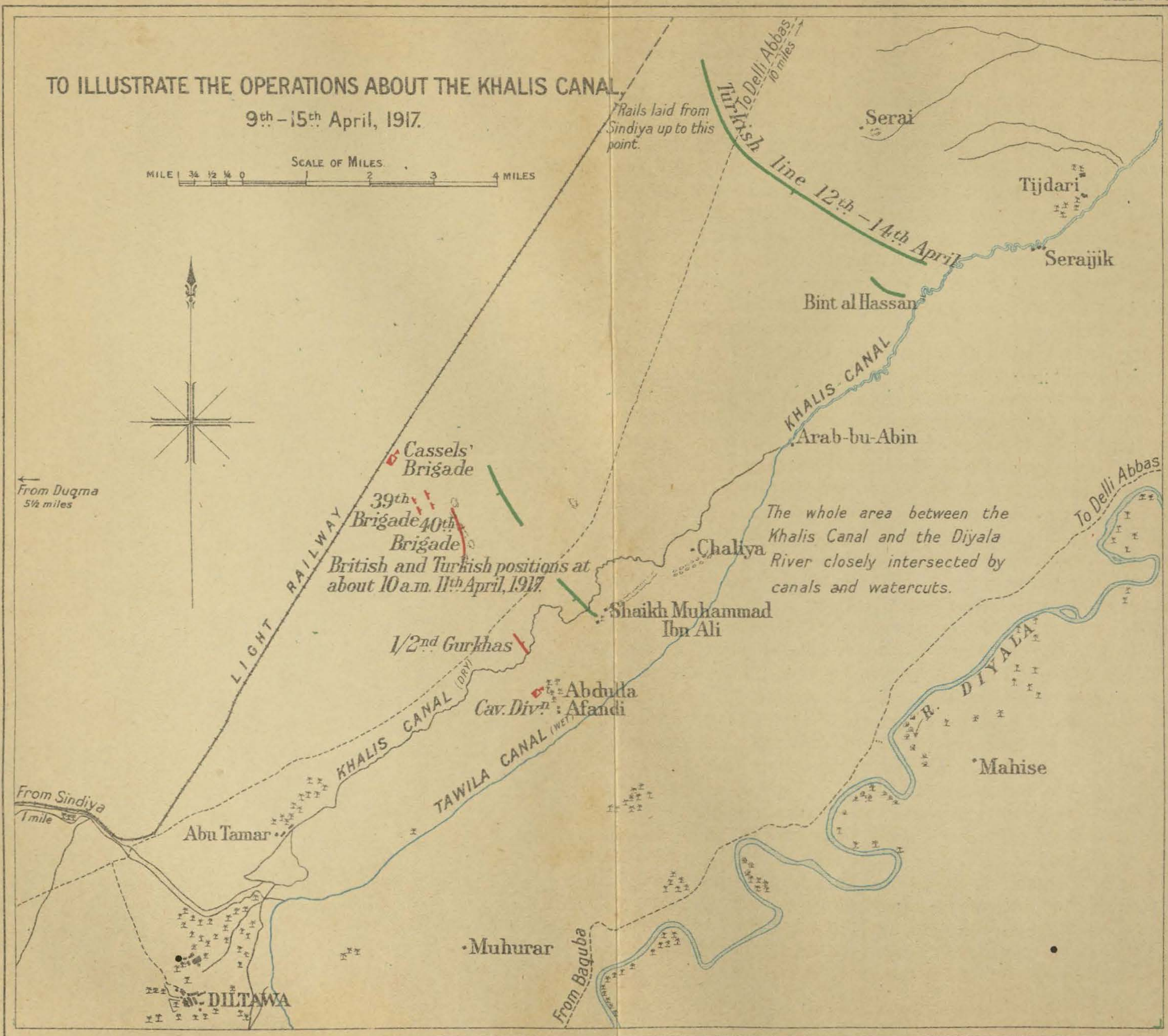
* The 39th had relieved the 40th Brigade after dark.

at 4 p.m. Colonel Henslowe received orders to fall back, his detachment bivouacking that night about eight miles south-west of Delli Abbas.

The sudden rise which had recently taken place in the day temperature and the scarcity of drinking water in the area of operations had caused General Cayley's men considerable suffering. But they had fought well in spite of it, and had displayed great spirit and dash in their attacks over ground absolutely devoid of cover. Our means of obtaining by observation timely information of the enemy's dispositions and of utilising our superior artillery effectively had been continuously hampered by the strong mirage, the frequent dust storms which affected our aeroplanes, and the fact that it was found practically impossible to run aeroplane engines in the heat of the day owing to the oil running thin. These had been some of the reasons why the Turkish XIII Corps, whose attack on us would have been impossible but for the Russian inactivity, had managed to escape without heavier loss. General Maude had, however, succeeded in forcing the two Turkish army corps back in divergent directions.

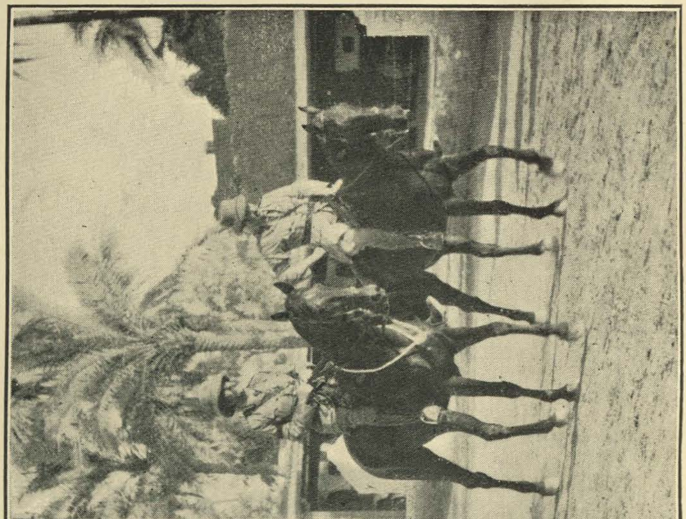
The success we had gained owed much to the hard and continuous work of our Air Force who, in addition to their difficulties from climatic and local reasons, found that their obsolete B.E., Martinsyde and Bristol Scouts were not really fit to compete on equal terms with the new types of German machines which arrived on the Turkish Tigris front at the beginning of April. Our authorities in Mesopotamia had foreseen this probability and for some weeks past had been representing to the Air Board in London that a newer type of machine was urgently required. But it was not till April that the Air Board found it possible to despatch some new "Spads" to Basra. As these, however, could not arrive in time, arrangements were made to send a few Bristol Scouts from Egypt as a stop-gap. In the meantime, news from various sources indicated that the enemy expected twelve new aeroplanes, half of them Halberstadts ;* and on the 3rd April two of the latter were encountered in the air by one of our B.E's with the result that our machine, though damaged, got home safely, while both of the German machines were reported by Arabs to have been damaged and one of them forced to land and burnt. During the next fortnight there were many indecisive air combats and the enemy's new machines interfered frequently

* According to Captain Schütz ("History of the German Air Service") nine new "scouts" arrived.



Ordnance Survey. 1925.

To face page 323.



General Maude in Baghdad.

with our aerial reconnaissances, without, however, doing us much damage. On the 12th April our aeroplanes carried out an apparently effective raid under heavy anti-aircraft and machine gun fire against the enemy's aerodrome at Samarra; but on the 15th one of our machines was destroyed by enemy aeroplanes and the pilot and observer killed.*

Writing to General Whigham on the 14th April, General Maude, after describing his own operations and deploring the lost opportunities due to the Russian inactivity, said that there was a tremendous lot of work still to be done in the Baghdad area. Things were settling down, however, and the city, where he had remade many of the streets and had a good staff of officers and police, was getting into very good order; and some hospitals there had been already opened. The supply situation was good and the inhabitants professed to welcome the British occupation; while the fact that the Tigris was still eight feet below the high level, looked as if big floods would not occur. The general situation was quiet except in the area of operations and near Falluja and Shaikh Saad, in which two localities the Arabs were still very aggressive. On the other hand, the hitherto recalcitrant Shatra tribes on the Hai were settling down.

General Fane's column on the Tigris right bank, which had occupied Harba on the 9th April, made no further advance during the period of General Marshall's operations against the Turkish XIII Corps. At Harba, the force was twenty-three miles from its riverhead (on the Tigris), which could not be moved farther upstream till General Marshall had crossed the Adhaim. But between the 9th and 16th April, General Fane's troops were fully employed in reconnaissance, both tactical and topographical. The Turks were found to be busy entrenching a position astride the railway at Istabulat, where air reconnaissance disclosed that they had dug at least twenty-eight gun pits; and the armoured cars carried out a raid on the 12th April against the rear of this position, when they surprised the enemy and inflicted some sixty casualties on them. The line of communications between Fort Kermea and Harba was improved; and the railway line, damaged by the Turks, was repaired, enabling General Fane to utilise on it, with mule draught, the trucks he had captured at Balad. A defensive

* Their funeral service at Samarra was conducted personally by Captain Schütz, the German aircraft commander, in accordance with the marked good feeling that existed between the British and German air services in, apparently, all the theatres of operations.

position at Harba was constructed, with bridges over the Dujail canal, to meet a possible enemy offensive; a site for a Tigris bridge in the Barura bend selected and connected by road with Balad; and troops from the 3rd Division took over the detachments opposite Sindiya and at Fort Kermea.

In an operation order issued at 6 p.m. on the 15th April General Maude gave the enemy's strength and dispositions as follows:—

		Sabres.	*Rifles.*	*Guns.*
XIII Corps (2nd, 6th and 14th Divisions).	Opposite the Russians above Qizil Ribat	600	3,950	14
	About Delli Abbas	350	1,100	8
	Jabal Hamrin, astride Delli Abbas–Qara Tepe road ..	—	1,300	6
	Further northwards towards Qara Tepe	—	1,100	9
	About Qara Tepe..	—	3,200	12
XVIII Corps (51st and 52nd Divisions and reinforcements).	On the Adhaim	300	1,500	4
	About Istabulat	330	9,200	32
	About Samarra on both banks of the Tigris and *en route* to Samarra from Ramadi ..	—	2,250	20
Euphrates Line.	At Ramadi	50	200	2
	At Hit	70	300	—
	Total	1,700	24,100	107

It should be noted, with reference to this information, that General Maude's Intelligence Staff had recently learnt that the enemy had ceased, at any rate for the time being, to build *shakturs* for use on the Euphrates and that all their reinforcements were being sent via Ras-al-Ain to the Tigris. Also that there was then little traffic on the Euphrates below Dair-az-Zor. Information was also received that the 14th Turkish Division was *en route* to Band-i-Adhaim and that their 46th Division had left Constantinople for Asia Minor during the latter end of March.

General Maude's order went on to state his intention of forcing the passage of the Adhaim and of moving forward on the Tigris right bank to a position of readiness opposite the Istabulat position. Leaving the Cavalry Division, two infantry brigades and a proportion of divisional troops to contain the enemy's XIII Corps, General Marshall was to concentrate sufficient

troops near Duqma to force the passage of the Adhaim at an early date and then to secure the Barura peninsula so as to enable General Fane's column to bridge the Tigris there. The remainder of General Marshall's column was to be suitably disposed near Diltawa. Should General Marshall require more troops, they were to be drawn from the 42nd Infantry Brigade of the 15th Division, which had by this time reached Baghdad from the Nasiriya area. General Fane's column was to advance from Harba, secure a high embankment astride the railway about one and a half miles south east of Istabulat station and carry out a close reconnaissance of the enemy's position at Istabulat.

Advancing early on the 16th April, General Fane's column occupied without difficulty the position indicated, from which the enemy's advanced detachment fell back. General Fane then began a closer reconnaissance of the enemy's position, at the same time entrenching his own line. That day General Maude ordered the reinforcement of General Fane's column, which consisted of 70 sabres, 6,400 rifles and 44 guns, by the headquarters and two battalions 8th Brigade (3rd Division) and two artillery batteries ; and General Cobbe was directed to take over the command.

During the 16th and 17th April the following redistribution of the British troops on the Tigris left bank was carried out :—

A force under General Cayley, composed of sixteen squadrons, nine battalions and twenty-six guns,* was established in an entrenched position astride the Khalis canal, near Seraijik, so as to delay any advance by the Turkish XIII Corps towards the line Diltawa–Sindiya.

A force of four squadrons, three and a half battalions and twenty-two guns† was placed under the orders of the 14th Division and by it put at the disposal of the 37th Infantry Brigade at Baquba, to hold the line Baquba–Abu Tamar–

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* *Cavalry Division* (less one section " S " Battery, R.H.A., and 21st and 22nd Cavalry) = 4 regiments (16 squadrons) and 8 guns.

13th Division (less Hertfordshire Yeomanry Squadron, 38th Infantry Brigade, 55th Field Artillery Brigade, including A/69th Battery, one section D/66th Field Battery, 71st Company, R.E., and a proportion of administrative units) = 9 battalions and 18 guns.

† Composition and disposition as follows :—*At Baquba* : 22nd Cavalry, 2nd Field Battery, C/69th Howitzer Battery (less one section), 2nd Norfolk, 187th Machine Gun Company (less two sections), two sections 13th Company and 15th Company, Sappers and Miners. *On the line Baquba* (*exclusive*) *to Sindiya* : 13th Field Artillery Brigade (less one battery), one section C/69th Howitzer Battery, 1/2nd and 2/4th Gurkhas, 67th Punjabis (less two companies) and one section, 187th Machine Gun Company.

Sindiya and support General Cayley if he should be driven back by superior numbers.

The main body of General Marshall's column, composed of seven squadrons, eight battalions and forty guns,* concentrated near the Tigris on the eastern side of the Adhaim, with its principal bivouac and riverhead at Duqma.

In his operation order of the 17th April, General Maude's intention was stated as to contain the enemy's XIII Corps and that portion of his XVIII Corps on the Tigris right bank with Generals Cayley's and Cobbe's forces respectively, while General Marshall crossed the Adhaim and secured the northern end of the Barura peninsula ; and the Senior Naval Officer was requested to co-operate with General Marshall. General Cobbe's column was to entrench securely so as to prevent any forward movement by the enemy from the Istabulat position ; and the bridging train with his column was to be ready to move at short notice after 6 a.m. on the 18th, on orders from General Headquarters, to throw a bridge across the Tigris at Barura.

The country bordering the lower reaches of the Adhaim on both banks was very rough and cut up by numerous water courses.† Conglomerate cliff-like ridges rose in places to a height of thirty or forty feet, and where flat ground intervened between them and the river bed it was generally covered with low tamarisk trees and bushes. The actual water channel in April 1917 was only about eighty yards broad, though the river bed was much wider ; and there were two fords through the river not far from the Tigris. One was about four and a half miles in a straight northerly line from the Adhaim–Tigris junction and the other was near "High Point," close to the site of a bridge which had been destroyed by the enemy.

The Turks held, with a strength estimated at 300 sabres, 1,500 rifles and 4 guns, a line along the ridges of the western bank extending for some three and a half miles from a point about a mile above the river mouth ; and they had a second position about three-quarters of a mile in rear of the northern

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* Colonel Cassels' Cavalry Brigade (one section each "S" and D/66th Batteries, squadron Hertfordshire Yeomanry, 21st Cavalry and two squadrons 32nd Lancers). Artillery under Brigadier-General, Royal Artillery [134th Howitzer Brigade (twelve howitzers), 2/104th Battery (four 60-pounders), 80th Anti-Aircraft Section and 55th Field Artillery Brigade (including A/69th Battery), i.e., 16 guns and 4 howitzers]. 35th Infantry Brigade (1/5th Buffs, 37th Dogras, 102nd Grenadiers and 2/9th Gurkhas). 38th Infantry Brigade. 71st Company, R.E., with bridging unit attached. "C" Flight, 30th Squadron, R.F.C. Administrative units.

† See Map 31.

half of this line with its left flank thrown back to face north-eastward and northward. From these dispositions the Turkish commander appeared to anticipate that the British attack would fall mainly on his front or against his left flank.

General Marshall, however, had other intentions. His operation order, issued at 3 p.m. on the 17th April, contained only the following instruction.

> "The 38th Infantry Brigade will drive in the enemy's outposts and establish itself on the cliffs on the right bank of the Shatt al Adhaim by 5.30 a.m. to-morrow. The bridging of the river and capture of the enemy's main position will then proceed in accordance with instructions issued to commanders concerned. After the defeat of the enemy it is intended to secure the north end of the Barura peninsula."

But at 5 p.m., at a conference attended by his chief subordinates and by the Senior Naval Officer, General Marshall issued his full and final instructions.

According to these, the 6th East Lancashire and 6th South Lancashire, each with four pontoons and a machine gun section, under command of Lieutenant-Colonel F. H. Charlton (6th South Lancashire), were to start ferrying across the Adhaim, about half a mile above its mouth, at 2.20 a.m. On reaching the further bank they were to form up facing north with their left on the Tigris and to advance and assault at 4.30 a.m. the cliffs across the north end of the Kabaj peninsula. The 6th Loyal North Lancashire and a machine gun section, with A/69th and B/55th Batteries supporting them from positions south-east of "High Point," were, after detaching a company to guard the right flank, to wade across the ford there and at 4.30 a.m. assault the cliffs opposite; this attack being intended to draw the enemy's attention away from the main crossing to the south.

The 38th Brigade Headquarters would be just north of Point A, where the 6th King's Own and a machine gun section would form Brigade Reserve; and the bulk of the artillery would be in position on high ground to the west and north-west of this point. Colonel Cassels' cavalry brigade would feint a crossing at the northern of the two fords early in the morning; and the 35th Brigade (less 37th Dogras left to guard Duqma camp) would leave camp, also early in the morning, and concentrate at "A" in readiness to cross the bridge, which was to be thrown across the river at the point where the Old Nahrwan canal joined the Adhaim. (See Map 31.)

As soon as the East and South Lancashire had made good the cliff edge northward of Kabaj, they were to push forward patrols and then form a bridgehead between the Tigris and the Adhaim. Work on the bridge, by the bridging unit, 71st Company, R.E., and a hundred men 37th Dogras, was to commence as soon as the cliffs above it on the western bank were in our possession.

The North Lancashire, wading across the Adhaim, formed up on the further bank by 4 a.m. on the 18th April. They then started to advance over the thousand yards or so of flat bush-covered ground which intervened between them and their objective. It was not till they were within a hundred yards of the cliff edge that the enemy discovered them and opened fire. But this fire was so wild and inaccurate that it had little effect; and the North Lancashire, advancing rapidly, were able, with very few casualties, to establish themselves on the crest about point B. Consolidating their position, they received effective assistance from their two supporting batteries as soon as it was light enough for the latter to see*; the Turks gradually withdrew to their second line; and the North Lancashire extended their line northward to the upper ford and also to the south-westward.

On the British left, the advance to the river of the South and East Lancashire was somewhat delayed owing to the darkness, the clouds of dust and, in the last half-mile, the thick bush; all of which made it difficult to maintain touch. But the greater part of the men had crossed the river by 4.15 a.m. and then, without waiting for the remainder, they advanced northward. In this case also the Turks appear to have been taken completely by surprise, as they did not open fire till our men were within one hundred and fifty yards of the cliffs and then fled before the Lancashire assault. Pushing forward gradually, both battalions advanced till they were checked by enemy opposition about 8 a.m., the East Lancashire having reached the north side of the Old Nahrwan canal and the South Lancashire having advanced about six hundred yards up the Tigris. Although work on the bridge had started punctually, quicksands on the west side of the river much delayed its construction; and this gave the enemy time to take up positions to oppose the two Lancashire battalions, although in doing so they apparently suffered heavily from our gun fire.

The bridge was completed just before noon, but in the meantime the 6th King's Own had been ferried over the river

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* Sunrise was about 5.25 a.m.

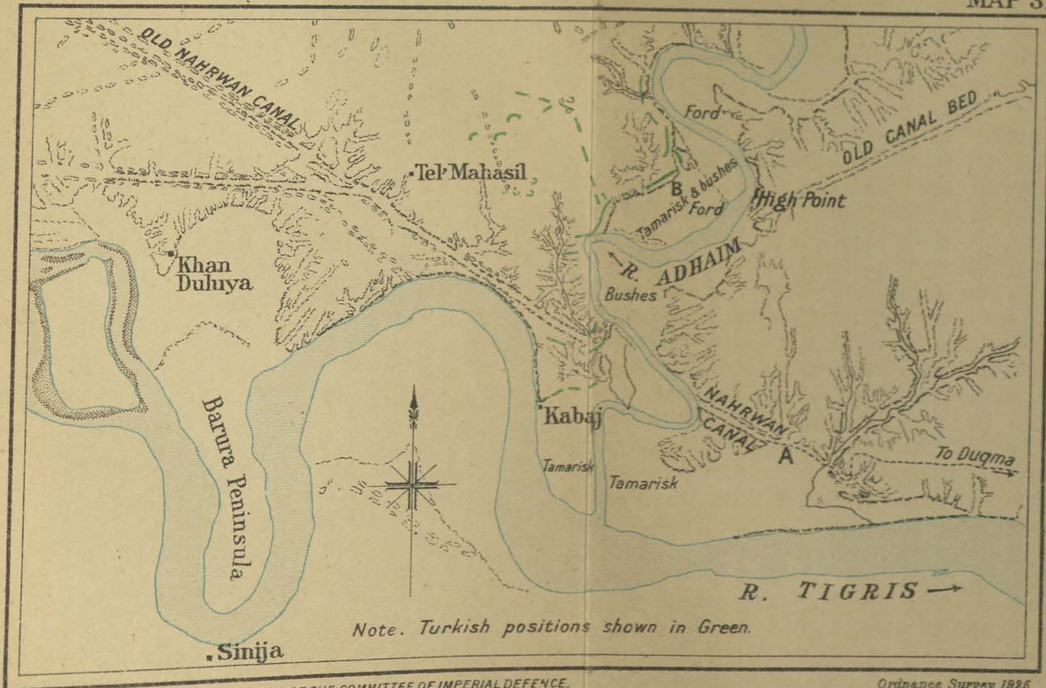
TO ILLUSTRATE THE PASSAGE OF THE ADHAIM

18th April, 1917.

SCALE OF MILES

MILE 1 3/4 1/2 1/4 0 1 2 3 MILES.

MAP 31



PREPARED IN THE HISTORICAL SECTION OF THE COMMITTEE OF IMPERIAL DEFENCE.

Ordnance Survey 1926

near the bridge site and it was decided that they and the East and South Lancashire should make an immediate attack. The East Lancashire were to attack along the north side of the Nahrwan canal, the King's Own in the centre and the South Lancashire on the left with their left on the Tigris. After a very effective fifteen-minute artillery barrage—starting at 12.15 p.m. —the attack commenced and gained immediate success. The enemy, offering little opposition, was seen to be hastily retiring; and by 1.15 p.m. we had captured over 400 prisoners and three machine guns. Pushing forward, the 38th Brigade reached a line across the neck of the peninsula between the Tigris and the Adhaim, when orders were received to await the advance of the 35th Brigade, who would pass through the 38th Brigade and advance along the north side of the Nahrwan canal. The 38th Brigade, moving on the south side of the canal, was to co-operate in this advance.

The 35th Brigade crossed the bridge between 1.0 and 2.0 p.m., followed about the latter hour by Colonel Cassels' cavalry brigade, which had returned from its demonstration against the upper ford at about 7 a.m. The enemy were by this time in full retreat; and Colonel Cassels received orders to pursue. These orders he carried out with rapidity, skill and resolution, turning the enemy's retreat into a rout and capturing about 800 prisoners and three machine guns. Having advanced some fourteen miles by dark, Colonel Cassels withdrew and at about 11 p.m. went into bivouac at Khan Duluya. The remainder of the force was bivouacking here and at a point on the Tigris about two and a half miles to the east, covered by a line of outposts from the Tigris near Khan Duluya to the Adhaim.

In this engagement, in which the 21st Cavalry, the horse and field batteries engaged and the 38th Infantry Brigade* particularly distinguished themselves, General Marshall obtained a brilliant success at the cost of only 73 casualties.† The Turkish force opposed to us appears to have consisted of the three battalions of the 40th Regiment with four guns and was practically annihilated; as, although we did not capture the guns, we took about 1,250 prisoners, all of the 40th Regiment, and six machine guns. The 37th Regiment was said by prisoners to have been in reserve in rear, but it does not appear to have been engaged.

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* Commanded by Brigadier-General O'Dowda.

† H.M.S. *Tarantula* and *Waterfly* also co-operated with gun fire.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

OPERATIONS TO THE NORTH AND NORTH-WESTWARD OF BAGHDAD; 19TH–30TH APRIL, 1917.

(Maps 26, 32 and 33.)

ON the evening of the 18th April General Maude telegraphed to Generals Marshall and Cobbe: "As result of vigorous and successful action by Marshall's column, it is possible that Turkish XIII Corps may be tempted to take offensive again from Delli Abbas. If so, Cayley is in good position to deal effectively with such movement. It should also be remembered that our information is to effect that 14th Turkish Division moved to Band-i-Adhaim yesterday. Consequently, portions of this force may come down west bank of Shatt al Adhaim marching all night to make diversion, but this too Marshall's column will be easily able to deal with.

"Cobbe's column should throw bridge at Barura bend as soon as practicable, so as to enable troops to be transferred from either bank as occasion demands. Cobbe's column also to watch closely movements from Istabulat position and notify them at once in case enemy should decide to weaken his force on right bank to reinforce that on left bank."

General Cobbe had just taken over command of the column on the Tigris right bank facing the strong Turkish position at Istabulat.* The Turkish line here extended from the Tigris for about two and a half miles—across the Dujail canal and the railway and facing south-east—to a point about a mile west of Istabulat station, whence it bent back nearly at right angles and continued, roughly parallel to the railway, for a further six miles to a point west of Istabulat ruins. The Dujail canal, twenty to twenty-five feet wide with a six-foot depth of water, was a considerable obstacle, whose high banks, rising in places to forty feet, had been prepared to give flanking fire over the ground south of it. Two redoubts north of the canal were prominent features of the Turkish left, and immediately in rear of the left centre of their line a group of mounds afforded good machine gun positions. On the 18th April the strength of the Turkish force holding this position had been estimated at about 200 sabres, 9,300 rifles and 32 guns, with reserves near Samarra amounting to some 200

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* See Map 32.

sabres, 1,550 rifles and 12 guns ; but next day it was concluded that the number of rifles at Istabulat could not amount to more than 7,500.

At 10.50 a.m. on the 19th April, General Maude asked General Cobbe to telegraph at once summarising his proposals for offensive action, bearing in mind that the troops opposing him were much shaken. General Cobbe replied to the following effect at 1 p.m., after a personal reconnaissance. So long as water remained in the Dujail canal, the defensive position occupied by the British from the Jibbara mounds along the High Earth Bank (Al Mustabba)* was very strong. But the two and a half miles which intervened between it and the enemy's line to the south of the Dujail canal was open, flat, stony ground in which digging would be difficult. Attack over this area would require preliminary approaches, which could be made at night but in which it would be impossible to provide the drinking water required in the heat of the day ; and it would be difficult to support such an attack with artillery. North of the canal, broken ground afforded cover, was close to water and allowed of entrenching. As a first step General Cobbe proposed to attack north of, and along, the canal and endeavour to capture the enemy's bridges over the canal. As a preliminary to this attack on the morning of the 21st, it was intended on the night 19th/20th to gain an advanced line astride the canal, about one mile north-west of Al Khubn, with its left refused along Low Bank, in order to cover the occupation of artillery positions. These proposals received General Maude's approval.

During the 19th, a bridge, 275 yards in length, was constructed across the Tigris at Sinija. General Marshall, whose troops were clearing the battlefield of the 18th and resting, received instructions from General Maude to prevent any hostile advance towards Diltawa from the Delli Abbas direction and to contain any movement down the Adhaim by the Turkish 14th Division from Band-i-Adhaim. On the 20th he was to reconnoitre up the Tigris left bank to ascertain if the enemy held any position about Kadisiya, to detail the 134th Howitzer Brigade, R.F.A., to join General Cobbe's column and to hold Colonel Cassels' Cavalry Brigade in readiness also to join General Cobbe. At the same time General Cobbe was told to keep close touch with the enemy and pursue instantly if he retired ; preparations for the attack being meanwhile pushed forward with all speed, in case the enemy decided to stand.

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* Really an ancient Median wall.

During the night 19th/20th, the 21st Infantry Brigade, encountering very little opposition, moved forward and occupied the line indicated by General Cobbe. Here it constructed a series of strong points and pushed patrols well to the front.

In an operation order issued by General Maude at 11 a.m. on the 20th April it was stated that the enemy appeared to have readjusted his forces as follows :—

		Sabres.	*Rifles.*	*Guns.*
XIII Corps	Along the Diyala, above Qizil Ribat, opposite the Russians (one regiment 2nd Division, irregular battalions, and Cavalry Brigade)	600	3,250	14
	About Delli Abbas (6th Division) ..	350	2,400	24
	About Qara Tepe (2nd Division, less one regiment)	—	2,900	12
	Moving from Band-i-Adhaim towards Satha, down the west bank of the Adhaim (14th Division) ..	50	2,100	9
XVIII Corps	On Tigris left bank, just south of Samarra (166th and 3/37th Regiments)	300	2,300	8
	About the Istabulat position (51st and 52nd Divisions and two battalions 181st Regiment) ..	200	6,700	31
	About Samarra, mainly on Tigris right bank (one battalion 181st Regiment and drafts)	200	1,550	8

The order continued: "Tendency is, therefore, for XIII Corps, leaving containing force opposite Russians and detachment about Delli Abbas, to move down Shatt al Adhaim to exert pressure on portion of Marshall's column about Barura, whilst XVIII Corps stands fast defensively. Being on interior lines with the rivers bridged, we are in good position strategically. Intention is to act defensively on left bank Tigris temporarily and offensively on right bank Tigris so as to destroy remainder of much shaken XVIII Corps, numbers of which holding Istabulat position have dwindled considerably."

"Marshall's column to keep sufficient troops in neighbourhood of Tijdari to deal with any possible demonstration from line Lambarak–Delli Abbas towards Diltawa. Remainder of Marshall's column to be assembled in vicinity of Shatt al Adhaim so as to deal with any movement of enemy down Shatt al Adhaim or down left bank of Tigris from Samarra. Advanced enemy's troops moving down Shatt al Adhaim may be expected

to reach neighbourhood of Tulul en Nor to-morrow, but owing to their distribution in depth should not be fully closed up for several days. Although role of Marshall's column here is primarily defensive, favourable opportunities for dealing with enemy's troops in detail before concentration should be seized."

"Cobbe's column to deal effectively with enemy about Istabulat with least possible delay. Cassels' composite cavalry brigade to join Cobbe's column temporarily to-night."

Two further messages sent by General Maude to General Marshall about 5 p.m. suggested the advisability of bringing part of the Cavalry Division to the Shatt al Adhaim; and a third message sent at 9.30 p.m. to both General Marshall and General Cobbe said that later indications that afternoon emphasised the fact that there was a general movement of the XIII Corps westward towards Band-i-Adhaim and then down the right bank Shatt al Adhaim. Its leading troops appeared to have been in motion for some three days, but the Turkish columns were distributed in depth between Satha and Qara Tepe; and the XIII Corps had apparently left a detachment opposite the Russians and one about Delli Abbas to demonstrate towards Diltawa. These movements seemed to suggest the possibility that Istabulat would be further weakened to reinforce the Tigris left bank and so bring about a junction of the XIII and XVIII Corps. Cobbe's column should, therefore, continue to act vigorously so as to destroy the XVIII Corps detachment on the right bank and still be ready to detach troops, if ordered, to assist Marshall's column when the full converging attack of the XIII Corps from Band-i-Adhaim and the XVIII Corps detachment on the left bank from Samarra developed towards Barura, probably in three or four days' time.

It is noteworthy that on or about the 19th April General Maude heard from the Russians that the Diyala was by then unfordable, that it was likely to remain so for at least a month and that they had insufficient material to bridge it.

During the 20th, a detachment of all arms from General Marshall's force, under the command of Colonel Peck, R.A., reconnoitred up the Tigris left bank as far as Kadisiya without encountering any enemy, but found good positions for enfilading the Turkish line on the opposite bank. The 134th Howitzer Brigade, R.F.A., crossed the Tigris and joined General Cobbe and was to be followed next day by Colonel Cassels' cavalry brigade (less Herts Yeomanry squadron), a

cavalry brigade (less one regiment) from General Cayley's force being ordered to move to Barura; and the riverhead for General Cobbe's column was established at Sinija.

For the attack on Istabulat, General Cobbe would have at his disposal seven squadrons of cavalry, four infantry brigades (of which one was only two and a half battalions strong), 76 guns and howitzers and the 13th Light Armoured Motor Battery, all his units being weak in strength.*

In his operation order, issued at 12.25 p.m. on the 20th April, General Cobbe announced his intention of attacking the enemy's left on the 21st with the 7th Division (one squadron 32nd Lancers and 13th Light Armoured Motor Battery attached) supported by all the available artillery. To drive in the enemy's left and seize his bridges over the Dujail canal, the first attack would be made on the north side of this canal; but immediately to the south of it troops were to be suitably disposed to push forward and exploit rapidly the success gained on the north. The remainder of the British position was to be held defensively with piquets well forward; and the 8th Infantry Brigade was to be in reserve near 7th Division headquarters but was not to be employed without General Cobbe's permission.

To carry out these orders, General Fane, commanding 7th Division, made the following arrangements. After getting into position north of the Dujail canal under cover of the outpost line, the 21st Brigade was to advance at 5 a.m. on the 21st April and drive the enemy off the northern bank of the canal, following him up with vigour to secure the canal bridges before the Turks could destroy them. One company 19th Brigade was placed at the disposal of the 21st Brigade for the immediate protection of its left flank during the advance.

The 19th Brigade (less one company), assembling immediately east of Al Mustabba by 5 a.m., was to be ready to

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**Cavalry*.—One squadron, 32nd Lancers. Cassels' brigade (21st Cavalry and two squadrons, 32nd Lancers).

Infantry.—8th, 19th, 21st and 28th Brigades. Of the 8th Brigade the 2/124th Baluchis and half 59th Rifles were distributed in detachments at Balad, Harba, Sinija and Fort Kermea.

Artillery.—One section "S" Battery, R.H.A., and one section D/66th Battery, R.F.A. = 4 guns (with Cassels' brigade). 9th and 56th Brigades and D/69th Battery, R.F.A. = 34 guns and 4 howitzers (7th Division). 2/86th Battery (60-pounders) = 4 guns. 4th Brigade (7th and 14th Batteries), R.F.A. = 12 guns. Section 524th Howitzer Battery = 2 howitzers. 134th Howitzer Brigade = 12 howitzers. B/69th Battery = 4 howitzers. No. 93 Anti-aircraft Section.

13th Light Armoured Motor Battery.

exploit the success of the 21st Brigade attack by advancing on the south side of the canal against the hostile position immediately south of the canal.

The 28th Brigade, holding the British defensive line south of the railway, was to patrol vigorously so as to distract the enemy's attention from his left flank.

The artillery north of the railway, i.e., all but B, C and D Batteries of the 56th Brigade, was to support the attack of the 21st Brigade and to barrage the enemy's front trenches from the canal to about half a mile south-westward of it, the 134th Howitzer Brigade and 2/86th Battery (60-pounders) being employed as counter-batteries when necessary. B, C and D Batteries, 56th Brigade, south of the railway, were to neutralise the enemy's front trenches farther to the south-west and also his advanced trenches near Istabulat station.

The 32nd Lancers' squadron was to protect the British left flank, where the armoured cars of the 13th Light Armoured Motor Battery were also to be in observation ready to take advantage of any favourable opportunity of operating against the enemy's line of retreat.

On the 21st April, after a few minutes' artillery bombardment, the 21st Brigade began to advance at 5.5 a.m., its first objective being Redoubt A. The 2nd Black Watch, in eight lines on a frontage of two hundred yards and accompanied by a machine gun section, advanced with its left on the canal; and to protect its left a company 28th Punjabis (19th Brigade) moved forward simultaneously along the south bank of the canal. The 1/8th Gurkhas with a machine gun section advanced level with, and on the right of, the Highlanders directly against Redoubt A along a ridge of high ground; and the 9th Bhopal Infantry, to the right rear of the Gurkhas, moved along the foot of the slopes of the high ground. In brigade reserve near the 21st Brigade headquarters, about half a mile north-west of Al Khubn, were the 20th Punjabis and two machine gun sections.

At first our infantry made rapid progress; as the Turkish advanced posts, whose line of retreat was across the open, offered little opposition and surrendered as soon as our troops reached them. The Turkish artillery opened fire at 5.17 a.m.* and by 5.35 a.m. our infantry had advanced so far that they came under heavy rifle and machine gun fire from the enemy's main position. Eight guns of the 9th Brigade, R.F.A., then moved forward to afford our attack closer support.

* Sunrise was at 5.28 a.m.

Redoubt A was captured before 7 a.m. by the 1/8th Gurkhas; the retreat of the Turkish garrison, who surrendered, being cut off by the 9th Bhopal Infantry, who had got round them from the right. Then swinging half left, the Gurkhas advanced against Redoubt B and entered it simultaneously with the Black Watch, both battalions displaying fine gallantry. To the right of the Gurkhas, the 9th Bhopals came under heavy rifle and machine gun fire as they debouched from the cover of the high ground; and losing practically the whole of their leading company had to fall back again to cover.

Both the Black Watch and 1/8th Gurkhas were now suffering heavy casualties; and a determined Turkish counter-attack recaptured Redoubt B. But the Highlanders and Gurkhas rallied quickly and regained possession of the eastern part of the redoubt, maintaining their hold of it for the rest of the day. At 7.10 a.m. two companies 20th Punjabis were sent forward to reinforce the Black Watch and Gurkhas, and were followed by the rest of their battalion at about 8.30 a.m., when the 53rd Sikhs (28th Brigade), sent forward in support from the 7th Division reserve, reached 21st Brigade headquarters.

In the meantime, the 19th Brigade had assembled southward of the canal; and at 6 a.m. sent forward the 92nd Punjabis and a machine gun section against Istabulat station. Well supported by artillery, the Punjabis, driving back the enemy's advanced troops, captured the station about 6.45 a.m. with only slight loss; and, continuing to advance, reached a position within six hundred yards of the enemy's main line, where they came under heavy rifle and machine gun fire and dug themselves in. Here they remained, covering the left of their brigade, for the rest of the day.

As the 21st Brigade appeared to be making good progress, the main body of the 19th Brigade was ordered at 6.15 a.m. to advance; and it began to move forward a few minutes later, on a frontage of eight hundred yards. The 28th Punjabis were on the right with their right on the canal, the 1st Seaforth Highlanders on the left and the 125th Rifles followed in brigade reserve. The advance had to cross two miles of open plain devoid of cover, but the Punjabis and Highlanders moved forward steadily and in fine order; and, although when about a thousand yards from the enemy's main line they came under heavy fire, they continued to advance without a halt. Just before 7.30 a.m. they assaulted and captured the enemy's front line on a length of about seven hundred yards southward from the canal, the Seaforths having to make a block in the trench

on their left, as the Turks still held to the southern part of their line. The 125th Rifles then moved up to reinforce the captured line, which was consolidated and held against Turkish counter-attacks and a continuous heavy bombardment for the rest of the day.

At 8.15 a.m. General Fane, intending to carry out the original intention of turning the enemy's left flank north of the canal, ordered the 19th Brigade to advance no farther for the time being. All the available artillery was pushed forward to support the 21st Brigade closely in this turning attack, which was to commence at 11 a.m., under cover of an artillery bombardment starting at 10.45. But the bombardment had little effect; and the officers commanding the Black Watch and 1/8th Gurkhas decided together that they would not be justified in attempting to assault the enemy's trenches which he was seen to be still holding in great strength; more especially as it would in any case be very difficult to launch an assault from the redoubt they were in. As telephone communication with Brigade headquarters had broken down, they sent back word of their decision by runner at 11.30 a.m.

By noon the fight had become stationary. The 53rd Sikhs of the 28th Brigade were still in reserve with 21st Brigade headquarters, all of whose own four battalions were in front line; the 9th Bhopals being in Redoubt A and the 20th Punjabis in a trench connecting Redoubts A and B. The positions of the 19th Brigade front line were unchanged; but soon after 8 a.m. a company of the 1st Manchester Regiment of the 8th Brigade had taken over, from the 28th Brigade, the outpost line south of the railway. The 56th Rifles had been sent forward to assist the 92nd Punjabis near Istabulat station and the remaining two battalions of the 28th Brigade were in divisional reserve near the junction of the railway and the High Earth Bank.

During the early morning our aeroplanes had been much hampered by the activities of enemy machines; and when these moved off the heat prevented further work in the air. Consequently our counter-batteries had been unable to deal effectively with the enemy's guns, which continued at intervals throughout the day to shell our infantry heavily and accurately. By noon it had become very hot; and orders were issued for our infantry to consolidate their gains and take what rest they could preparatory to renewing the attack when it became cooler. In the meantime, our guns were to keep up a slow and deliberate bombardment with the main object of destroying the enemy's many machine guns.

During the afternoon the 21st Brigade, as the result of a careful reconnaissance, reported that it could advance no further till a broken sandy ridge, in front of the main body of the 19th Brigade, had been captured. From the northern edge of this ridge the enemy commanded effectively both banks of the Dujail canal; and along the ridge were many machine guns, in well sited emplacements, which swept all approaches. It would have to be captured by an attack south of the canal and, for this, it would be difficult to reinforce and reorganise the 19th Brigade during daylight. It was, therefore, decided to register the ridge and neighbouring trenches carefully, carry out a slow and systematic bombardment in the evening and capture it next morning under cover of an intense bombardment.

Colonel Cassels' cavalry brigade had joined General Cobbe during the morning and received orders about 4 p.m. to move round our left flank and reconnoitre for positions whence it could co-operate by fire with General Fane's attack. The squadron 32nd Lancers and 13th Light Armoured Motor Battery were to come under Colonel Cassels' orders, and the whole force was to withdraw at dusk. Carrying out these orders, Colonel Cassels' troops had several skirmishes with enemy patrols and captured a few prisoners.

General Cobbe heard at midday from General Marshall that the previous day's reconnaissance showed that excellent positions existed on the Tigris left bank for artillery co-operation with General Cobbe's attack if this should be required; and about 2 p.m. General Cobbe replied that such assistance from General Marshall's artillery would be of great value. In consequence of this, General Marshall arranged for twelve guns, including four 60-pounders of the 2/104th Battery, the Hertfordshire Yeomanry squadron and the 1/5th Buffs and 37th Dogras, under General Thomson, to move up the Tigris left bank and be in position ready at daybreak next morning to co-operate with General Cobbe's column.

During the afternoon and evening of the 21st April there was little else of special incident in the fighting except that about 4.40 p.m. the Turks made a determined counter-attack against the 92nd Punjabis and 56th Rifles near Istabulat station. But these two battalions, receiving effective assistance from their supporting artillery, drove the Turks back again.

As soon as it was dark, reorganisation and preparations for next morning's attack were taken in hand. The 92nd Punjabis and 56th Rifles were relieved by the 1st Manchester Regiment

and rejoined their respective brigades. The 21st and 19th Brigades continued the consolidation of their trenches and, assisted by a sapper company and one of pioneers, constructed a covered communication way along the canal bank as well as a footbridge across the canal near the front line. The 28th Brigade furnished the necessary outposts between the 19th Brigade and the Manchesters, and the 8th Brigade those to the south of the latter battalion; and detailed orders were issued for the attack.

About 3.30 a.m. on the 22nd April, however, patrols of the 19th and 21st Brigades reported signs of enemy withdrawal; and about an hour later further reports said that the Turks had evacuated their positions north of the Dujail canal, though they still appeared to be holding on to the south of the canal, but more than three hundred yards from the 19th Brigade front. General Fane thereupon ordered the 21st Brigade to secure the high ground covering the Turkish canal bridges and to consolidate the neck of land between the Tigris and the canal.

At 5.25 a.m. General Cobbe ordered the 8th Brigade to send forward patrols to ascertain the enemy's strength in his front line astride the railway; and ten minutes later instructed General Fane to push forward vigorously with artillery support so as to reach Istabulat Police Post before it got hot. In accordance with these instructions, General Fane issued orders about 6 a.m. for the 19th Brigade to advance along the south side of the Dujail canal, the 21st Brigade to secure the ground between the canal and the Tigris and the 28th Brigade to concentrate as divisional reserve in the recent Turkish front line.

The 19th Brigade and General Thomson's detachment on the Tigris left bank had already begun to advance, i.e., at 5.15 a.m.; and at 6.37 a.m., after receipt of various reports confirming the enemy's retirement, General Cobbe ordered a vigorous pursuit, Colonel Cassels being directed to push forward along the Aj Jali canal, obtaining an additional battery from Istabulat station if required. At 8 a.m. General Cobbe ordered the 8th Infantry and 4th Artillery Brigades to concentrate near the enemy's late front line and form Column Reserve.

By 9.30 a.m. the 19th Brigade, encountering no opposition, reached Hill 200, on the far side of which enemy shrapnel shells were bursting; and here the brigade halted temporarily, it being very difficult to see what was in front, owing to the clouds of dust raised by the high wind. Five minutes later,

an enemy Halberstadt, shot down by one of our Bristol Scouts, crashed into the middle of its leading battalion;* and, five minutes after that, the brigade received instructions to support closely the 28th Brigade, which had received orders to pass through the 19th Brigade.

The 28th Brigade reached the front at about 11 a.m. and advanced, followed in support by the 19th Brigade and by the 21st Brigade (less 20th Punjabis) behind the 19th in divisional reserve. With strong patrols pushed well forward, the 28th Brigade, its front line consisting of the 2nd Leicestershire and 56th Rifles, in this order from the right, moved forward covering the whole frontage between the Dujail canal and the railway. It was not very long before its leading infantry began to come under hostile artillery fire and to encounter small advanced enemy detachments. But these fell back rapidly; and by 1.15 p.m., when the right of the Leicestershire reached a point about eight hundred yards north-west of the Police Post, the enemy appeared to be holding a position along a ridge about a mile farther to the north-west. By 2 p.m. it had been definitely established that the enemy was holding this position, which had been observed by our airmen several days previously and which extended westward across the railway. It was said to consist of a single line of interrupted trenches, the ground in front of them being broken near the river, but farther southward being open and slightly undulating. The commander of the 28th Brigade now received instructions (from General Fane) that, unless the enemy retired, he was on no account to push his attack until the position had been thoroughly reconnoitred, a full artillery bombardment carried out and barrages arranged.

While these steps were being taken, the infantry rested as far as possible; and General Fane decided that the 28th Brigade, closely supported by the 19th Brigade, should assault the enemy's left at 4.20 p.m., after an artillery bombardment beginning at 4 p.m.

At 2.50 p.m. General Cobbe received a report, giving the enemy's position, despatched at 11.50 a.m. by Colonel Cassels, whose brigade, reinforced by C/56th Battery, R.F.A., had worked forward along the Aj Jali canal. Colonel Cassels' advanced squadrons in contact with the enemy had observed some minor withdrawals, but nothing to indicate a definite retreat on the part of the Turks; and his brigade was then

* Six days later another Halberstadt shot down this same Bristol Scout; its pilot, Lieutenant Maguire, wounded and captured, dying soon afterwards in a Turkish hospital at Tikrit.

remaining in a position of readiness, chiefly owing to the exhaustion of the artillery horses. At 3.15 p.m. a message was sent to Colonel Cassels not to exhaust his horses and to get into close touch with the 28th Brigade. At 3.40 p.m. his guns came into action at a point two miles west of the Police Post and obtained good targets. The enemy's right flank, near the junction of two canals just west of the railway, was held strongly by infantry and machine guns, and Colonel Cassels tried to get round them.

On the Tigris left bank General Thomson's detachment, continuing to advance during the morning, led by his guns and cavalry under Colonel Peck, reached the vicinity of Al Qaim, whence they could see just across the river an enemy camp, animals watering, and a battery in action. The enemy being evidently unaware of our advance on this bank, our guns, taking up positions on high ground in rear of the enemy's line, fired most effectively and put many of the Turks to flight. Visibility being good, a steady enfilade fire was kept up from here on the Turkish position.*

General Fane's artillery bombardment commenced, as arranged, at 4 p.m. ; and, under cover of it, the Leicestershire, with their right on the Tigris, attacked on a 400-yard frontage supported by the 51st Sikhs. The 56th Rifles, moving in echelon to protect the left flank of the Leicestershire advance, were to attack to their own front supported by a separate bombardment as soon as the Leicestershire attack got home.

Much assisted by the fire of General Thomson's guns, the Leicestershire advanced with great dash and by 4.30 p.m. were in possession of their objective, having captured over 300 prisoners and two machine guns. Then, seeing the Turks fleeing before them, they pressed on rapidly in pursuit for about 1,200 yards where they rushed some Turkish gun positions and took seven guns. But they had outstripped their supports ; and before the 51st Sikhs could come to their assistance they were forced back, by a strong Turkish counter-attack against their left, to the trench line they had originally won, being obliged to abandon the captured guns. In the meantime the 56th Rifles had also gained their objective, having captured the enemy's trench line nearly as far west as the railway ; and they started to push on against the Turkish

* Neither General Fane nor General Cobbe appear to have realised how General Thomson's guns dominated the Turkish position, and, probably in consequence of this, they did not call on the latter for co-operation at any particular phase.

counter-attack. But the enemy was in considerable strength and the 56th, coming under close enfilade rifle fire from the railway embankment, were obliged to fall back again to the captured trench line, where, under considerable enfilade fire from the railway embankment, they held on with difficulty against the counter-attacks of superior numbers. At this period two machine guns of the 136th Machine Gun Company under Lieutenant Graham rendered most effective and gallant assistance. Most of the detachment became casualties and Lieutenant Graham, wounded in several places, carried one gun himself over several traverses in the open before he was finally incapacitated. For his gallantry Lieutenant Graham was awarded the Victoria Cross.*

For a short time the situation appeared to be rather critical. Two companies 53rd Sikhs had been sent to the right to reinforce the Leicestershire and 51st Sikhs ; and the remaining two 53rd companies, sent to support the 56th, tried unsuccessfully to reach them by moving along the railway line. The position was at last rendered secure by the arrival in the captured trench of the four battalions of the 19th Brigade, sent up in rapid succession to reinforce the whole front. The 21st Brigade also moved up in support to the Police Post, and attempts were then made to organise another attack to regain the Turkish guns. But the gathering darkness† and the confusion arising from the mixture of units caused these attempts to be abandoned.

While this infantry attack was in progress, Colonel Cassels' mounted brigade on the left tried to gain ground and assist in inflicting loss on the enemy. At about 5.45 p.m., when the 56th Rifles seemed to be in danger, Colonel Cassels' guns opened an intense bombardment of the Turkish flank position at the junction of the two canals ; and under cover of this a party of about forty of the 32nd Lancers, led by their regimental commandant and supported by four armoured cars (two on each side of the Aj Jali canal), rode straight at the Turkish position. Under heavy fire, the Lancers reached the Turkish trenches practically without casualties and the Turks began to run or surrender. But the fire of our guns had then to cease and the armoured cars were unable to follow up the cavalry very closely. The Turks rallied and, with the aid of machine guns, almost annihilated the small Lancer detachment, which

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* In " The Long Road to Baghdad," Candler gives an account of Lieutenant Graham's action, derived from the Officer Commanding 56th Rifles.

† Sunset was about 6.30 p.m.

suffered twenty-five casualties including their commandant, Colonel W. W. G. Griffith, and two other British officers killed. Of this gallant episode Edmund Candler, the official "Eye-Witness," in "The Long Road to Baghdad" speaks as follows :—

> "Yet the assault was not without its value in the action. Apart from the splendid spirit it showed, it was of material assistance to the infantry brigade at the very moment when the Turkish counter-attack was threatening to develop into serious proportions. The activity of our cavalry on his right acted as a caution to Shefket,* and he was content with recovering his guns and retiring."

Candler also says that General Thomson's guns on the Tigris left bank led largely to Shefket's determination to retire, as he was afraid that if he delayed the British would be in Samarra before him.

At 5 p.m. General Cobbe had heard from General Thomson that there were very few enemy troops between General Cobbe's column and Samarra station, as there had been a general exodus of Turks since 1 p.m. and there seemed to be few, if any, guns remaining ; and about the same hour General Cobbe received a telegram from General Headquarters saying :—

> "Army commander trusts you will not let enemy escape without being severely handled ; otherwise they are likely to withdraw just north of Samarra and entrench there."

General Cobbe repeated General Thomson's message to General Fane and at 5.20 p.m. sent the latter orders to push up all his troops and press his attack hard, as the enemy's strength could not be great.

The actual experience of the 28th and Colonel Cassels' Brigades between 5.0 and 6.0 p.m. shows that the Turks had not withdrawn to the extent that General Thomson, judging from his own and his officers' observations† between 1.0 and 3.0 p.m., supposed. For this misapprehension, the mirage, dust and the number of dry water-courses affording the enemy cover were probably responsible. It is also noteworthy that the stubborn and determined resistance that the Turkish XVIII Corps offered at Istabulat on the 21st and 22nd April was much greater than General Maude had anticipated or, until he received detailed accounts of the fighting, realised.

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* The Turkish XVIII Corps commander.

† They also heard, between 2.30 and 2.50 p.m., two large explosions in the direction of Samarra station.

During the afternoon two barges were seen floating down the Tigris, one of them on fire. Both were recovered and were found to contain fourteen old pattern Krupp guns without breech blocks, over 900 rifles and about half a million rounds of rifle ammunition, besides other stores. We also took from the battlefield of the 22nd April, a damaged howitzer, many rifles and a considerable quantity of other munitions.

As darkness came on, Colonel Cassels gradually withdrew his brigade to bivouac on the Tigris bank; but on the infantry front firing continued till about 8 p.m. At 7.45 p.m. General Cobbe issued orders for the operations to be continued next morning, the 8th Brigade being directed to move forward at 3 a.m. and act under General Fane's orders. The 19th and 28th Brigades spent the night in consolidating the captured line and their patrols ascertained that the Turks had retired.

The British began to advance again early on the 23rd April. No enemy was encountered and at 10 a.m. the leading brigade (21st) reached Samarra railway station. Its buildings had been destroyed and were still burning; but we captured sixteen engines and about 250 trucks,* in addition to other railway material. In the afternoon Colonel Cassels' brigade encountered, some five miles north of Samarra station, a small Turkish rear guard, which at once retired leaving eighteen prisoners in the hands of our cavalry. After this the Turkish XVIII Corps offered no further resistance, and was reported to have retired to Tikrit.

On the 24th April General Cobbe occupied Samarra, an ancient town, at one time the capital of the country and still of some local importance though much reduced in size. Surrounded by ancient ruins, it is celebrated as the place where the Roman Emperor Julian died of his wounds in A.D. 363 and where the disappearance of the Twelfth Imam (Imam Mahdi), whose resurrection is looked for by many Mahomedans, is reputed to have occurred.

During the fighting on the 21st and 22nd April General Cobbe's column incurred a total of 2,228 casualties, mostly in the battalions of the 7th Division.† But the enemy appears

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* All the engines had been damaged, but some were repairable and about three-fifths of the trucks were serviceable.

† *19th Brigade.*—1st Seaforth, 158; 28th Punjabis, 294; 92nd Punjabis, 40; and 125th Rifles, 234.

21st Brigade.—2nd Black Watch, 186; 9th Bhopal Infantry, 260; 20th Punjabis, 65; 1/8th Gurkhas, 177; and 135th Machine Gun Company, 26.

28th Brigade.—2nd Leicestershire, 129; 51st Sikhs, 196; 53rd Sikhs, 80; 56th Rifles, 183; and 136th Machine Gun Company, 20.

to have lost just as heavily ; for information was subsequently obtained which showed that he had lost over 3,700 in the actions of the 18th, 21st and 22nd. We buried 491 Turkish dead on the 22nd and between the 21st and 23rd we captured nearly 700 prisoners, besides 340 sick or wounded taken at Samarra on the 24th.

Inspection of the position we attacked on the 21st April showed that it was very strong and had been carefully prepared, many of the dug-outs having iron roofs. This seemed to indicate the enemy's intention of making a prolonged stay there ; and this was confirmed by the statements of prisoners that the Turks intended to hold it as their main Tigris line of defence during the hot weather. Though this was contrary to the opinion which General Maude had formed (from intelligence from various sources), it is further borne out by the stubborn resistance offered by the Turkish XVIII Corps. Fifteen battalions, averaging five hundred to six hundred rifles each, of their 51st and 52nd Divisions are said to have been engaged ; and the capture of this position by our troops, involving severe fighting during two days of extreme heat, was a fine performance.

General Cobbe received orders on the 24th April to reconnoitre a defensive position covering Samarra station, which his column was to hold so as to prevent any movement of the Turkish XVIII Corps down the Tigris right bank ; and he was to report at once any indication of movements by this Corps down the left bank. The Turks, however, seemed to have given up all idea of an offensive in this area for the time being. The main body of their XVIII Corps, with an estimated strength of 140 sabres, 4,900 rifles and 24 guns, was reported to be on both banks of the Tigris at Tikrit, with an advanced detachment of about 300 sabres, 2,350 rifles and 10 guns on the right bank of the Tigris about thirteen miles above Samarra.

On the 28th April, a pontoon bridge, removed from Sinija, was completed across the Tigris at Samarra. Being connected with it by railway, Samarra afforded a good outpost for the defence of Baghdad ; and it was also not far from where the Tigris issues into the plain from the defiles and foothills.

To turn now to the operations of General Marshall's column on the left bank of the Tigris. General Maude issued an operation order at 11.40 a.m. on the 21st April in which he estimated that the Turkish XIII Corps, having left about 350 sabres, 1,200 rifles and 16 guns about Delli Abbas, was moving a force of about 50 sabres, 6,200 rifles and 31 guns

westward and then down the Adhaim, of which about 50 sabres, 2,000 rifles and 9 guns might reach Tulul en Nor that night. The Turkish detachment about Delli Abbas was evidently meant as a containing force to keep as many of our troops as possible away from the Adhaim while the remainder of their force advanced on Barura. General Marshall was to entrench a position to cover the Adhaim and Tigris bridges from shell fire and, while watching for any enemy movement down the east bank of the Adhaim, was to take any suitable opportunity of beating the enemy in detail before his concentration was complete.

That day General Marshall arranged a redistribution of his troops. General Cayley's force was to hold the inner line Tawila canal–Diltawa–Abu Tamar–Sindiya in addition to the forward position about Tijdari; and the 37th Infantry Brigade group was to hold the line Baquba–Tawila canal and to detach an 18-pounder battery, a section of a howitzer battery, two infantry battalions and two machine gun sections to join the force on the Adhaim. These moves, which would set free the whole of the force with General Marshall on the Adhaim for active operations, were to begin that night.

General Maude's operation order of the 23rd April, issued at 11.30 a.m., gave the latest estimate of the Turkish XIII Corps dispositions. The enemy detachment opposite the Russians had been reduced to 600 sabres, 2,350 rifles and 12 guns; the containing force at Delli Abbas was as given on the 21st; a force of about 1,200 rifles and 10 guns was moving towards Band-i-Adhaim from a point about eight miles eastward of that place; 3,800 rifles and 12 guns had arrived about five miles south of Band-i-Adhaim; and 50 sabres, 2,100 rifles and 9 guns were about Tulul en Nor. General Maude's intention was to deal with the XIII Corps if it should continue its movement on Barura and to pursue the XVIII Corps as far up the right bank of the Tigris as the supply arrangements would permit. General Marshall was to despatch that evening a sufficient force to deal with the enemy's detachment at Tulul en Nor before it could be reinforced; and no further advance towards Samarra, up the left bank of the Tigris, was to be made till the XIII Corps had been dealt with or had withdrawn.

This movement by General Marshall's column was, however, postponed at the latter's request, so as to enable him to move in greater strength and also permit the enemy to approach closer. In approving this postponement General Maude recognised

that General Marshall's troops were rather scattered, especially with General Thomson's detachment up the Tigris left bank. But General Maude was rather afraid that, by delaying, we should lose the chance of inflicting loss on the Turkish XIII Corps. During the day General Marshall issued orders recalling General Thomson's detachment.

At daybreak on the 23rd April, General Marshall's column was distributed as follows :—

Main Column.

(*a*) *Near Tigris–Adhaim junction.*—

One section, C/69th Battery, R.F.A.
71st Company, R.E. (less two sections).
Bridging unit.
4th South Wales Borderers and one section 40th Machine Gun Company (40th Brigade).

(*b*) *Barura Peninsula.*—

Column Headquarters.
7th Cavalry Brigade (less 13th Hussars), "V" Battery, R.H.A., and proportion Divisional Troops.
55th Brigade, R.F.A. (less D/55th and A/69th Batteries).
44th Battery, R.F.A. (13th Brigade).
Two sections, 71st Company, R.E.
102nd Grenadiers, 2/4th Gurkhas and half 185th Machine Gun Company (35th Brigade).
1/2nd and 2/9th Gurkhas and half 187th Machine Gun Company (37th, attached 35th Brigade).
38th Infantry Brigade.
"C" Flight, No. 30 Squadron, R.F.C.

(*c*) *About Kadisiya,* moving eastward, under General Thomson.

Squadron Hertfordshire Yeomanry.
D/55th and A/69th Batteries.
2/104th Battery, R.G.A. (60-pounders).
Headquarters 35th Infantry Brigade, 1/5th Buffs, 37th Dogras and half 185th Machine Gun Company.

General Cayley's Force.

(*d*) *About Tijdari.*—

6th Cavalry Brigade (less 21st and 22nd Cavalry), 13th Hussars, "S" Battery, R.H.A., and proportion Divisional Troops.
66th Brigade, R.F.A. (less B/66th, one section D/66th and one section 72nd Batteries).
72nd Company, R.E. (less one section).
39th Infantry Brigade.

(*e*) *Tawila Canal–Abu Tamar–Sindiya.*—
13th Division (General Cayley) Headquarters.
B/66th, and one section 72nd, Batteries, R.F.A.
88th Company, R.E.
40th Infantry Brigade (less one battalion and one section 40th Machine Gun Company).

At 6.45 a.m. General Maude informed General Marshall that reliable information showed that the Turkish 14th Division—strength about 50 sabres, 2,000 rifles and 9 guns—had been at Tulul en Nor for the past two days and that the Turkish 2nd Division—strength about 4,000 rifles with some guns—was south of Band-i-Adhaim at midday on the 22nd and was probably closing on the 14th Division during the night. It seemed to be their intention to attack General Marshall west of the Adhaim, though the defeat of their XVIII Corps at Istabulat might cause a modification in their plans. In an operation order issued at 1.5 p.m. General Maude, after giving the enemy's estimated dispositions, which have already been shown, said that it seemed likely that the XIII Corps would entrench about Tulul en Nor and await attack, and that the XVIII Corps would hold a position some miles north of Samarra. General Maude's intention was to attack and defeat the XIII Corps before it was fully concentrated, and for this purpose General Marshall's column was to move that evening towards Tulul en Nor and attack the enemy at daybreak. The 134th Howitzer Brigade, which was still with General Cobbe, was to rejoin General Marshall at once; and General Cobbe was to concentrate about Samarra station and report progress.

About 3 p.m. General Maude suggested that General Marshall's force about Tijdari and Sindiya seemed to be unnecessarily strong, and that it might be wise to move forward more men and guns towards the Adhaim; as General Marshall's communications between the Adhaim and Sindiya were vulnerable and required watching, apart from the fighting strength required to attack and deal decisively with the Turkish XIII Corps, who, having been opposed to the Russians, were as yet unshaken.* General Marshall adopted this suggestion; and in an operation order issued at 4.45 p.m. he instructed General Cayley to reduce the strength of the force about Tijdari to one cavalry brigade (less two regiments), one 18-pounder and one section field howitzer batteries, two infantry battalions, and two machine gun sections. The

* This referred apparently to the Turkish 2nd Division.

remainder of General Cayley's force was to be on the Diltawa–Abu Tamar–Sindiya line ; but the 40th Infantry Brigade (less South Wales Borderers and a machine gun section) was to be kept concentrated about Sindiya ready to move at short notice. Orders for the operations against the Turkish XIII Corps would be issued in the evening after reconnaissance. But when the main column moved out, the Barura defences would be held by the 1/2nd and 2/9th Gurkhas, half 187th Machine Gun Company, and a section of the 44th Field Battery, while those on the Adhaim (i.e., near its mouth) would be held by the South Wales Borderers and a machine gun section (40th Brigade) with a section C/69th Battery, R.F.A.

In the order issued at 7.30 p.m., the enemy's advanced troops, strength about 2,000 rifles with 9 guns and some cavalry, were said to be preparing a position north-west of Dahuba,* which extended about four miles north-west from the Adhaim. General Marshall's main force was to attack this position early next morning and capture it before Turkish reinforcements could arrive from north of Satha ruins. A force under General O'Dowda, composed of one troop of cavalry, the 38th Infantry Brigade, and four field batteries (three of 55th Brigade and two-thirds 44th Battery), was to march at 2 a.m. to a point in a *nala* about one mile south-west of Dahuba.† The General Reserve (102nd Grenadiers and 2/4th Gurkhas, with half 185th Machine Gun Company) and General Marshall's headquarters were to follow at 3.30 a.m. General Thomson's force was to march from a point about six miles west of the Barura peninsula at 3 a.m. along a line of sandhills, marking an ancient canal site, to operate against the enemy's right flank. The 7th Cavalry Brigade, with orders to pass in rear of General Thomson's force and move so as to envelop the enemy's right rear and interpose between him and any reinforcements from the north-east, was to be about a point a mile to the north-west of Dahuba by 6 a.m., i.e., about half an hour after sunrise.

The above movements at night took place as ordered, except in the case of General Thomson. That officer's detachment, after marching through the night, only received General Marshall's order at about 5 a.m. on the 24th April, when it moved on at once to comply with it.

The map proved to be unreliable and, after marching on a due north bearing till about 4 a.m. on the 24th April, the

* It is not clear from the records when the Turkish advanced force moved from Tulul en Nor to Dahuba. But during the 23rd, enemy cavalry patrols were encountered north of Barura and our aeroplanes observed this position.

† This *nala* proved to be actually part of the enemy's position.

38th Brigade changed direction a little to the westward to avoid some camp fires taken to belong to Arabs ; but as dawn broke about 5 a.m., the 38th Brigade discerned men on a line of mounds about 3,000 yards to the north-eastward who proved to be the enemy. The 6th King's Own and 6th Loyal North Lancashire at once moved forward in that direction, supported by three batteries. Our infantry soon came under sharp rifle and machine gun fire, most of which fell on the North Lancashire on the left, whose line was somewhat in advance of the King's Own.* About 6.30 a.m. General Marshall received a message from General O'Dowda describing the situation and asking if he should proceed with the attack. Not long before this General Marshall had received a telegram, sent by General Maude at 5.17 a.m., saying :—

> " Reliable information states that enemy is entrenching line where your aeroplane observed him afternoon 23rd and that he intends to await attack there. His cavalry is still on left bank of Adhaim abreast of his leading troops. Remainder of enemy's force is already fully concentrated about one mile east of Tulul en Nor and bulk of it will reinforce right of enemy's advanced line this morning, remainder preparing main position about Tulul en Nor. One of Cobbe's brigades moves to Istabulat station this morning from Samarra station."

General Marshall replied at 6.55 a.m. to General O'Dowda :—

> " Wait until arrival of Thomson's force before attacking. One battalion† from Reserve has been detached to cover your right. It is working up the Adhaim right bank and will assist in clearing the enemy from the mounds to your right."

Not long after this, however, there were indications that the enemy was beginning to retire and, as the 7th Cavalry Brigade was already pushing out well to the flank, it was decided to attack at once without waiting for General Thomson's force. Actually this force, after marching all night, and hearing about 6 a.m. the sounds of battle to its right, but more to the southward than it expected, had marched to the scene of fighting.‡ General Thomson's force, two of whose batteries came into action, finding good targets, against the enemy, was out of

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* General O'Dowda had directed this battalion to hold back.

† 102nd Grenadiers.

‡ General Thomson had been directed to march on a point which was thought to be the right of the Turkish line. But actually the Turks were some two miles farther south than anticipated, so that the point indicated was north of the Turkish right.

sight of the 38th Brigade till after 7 a.m.; and the message from General Thomson reporting his arrival did not reach General Marshall till 7.20 a.m.

At 7.30 a.m. the 6th South Lancashire moved forward; and when they came up on the right of the King's Own, both battalions pushed on under cover of an artillery barrage and of the fire of the North Lancashire who were still ahead. The 6th East Lancashire formed brigade reserve. At 7.55 General Marshall received a message sent by the 7th Cavalry Brigade at 7.20 a.m. This said that the brigade was about two and a half miles north-east of General O'Dowda's left batteries and was approaching a *bund,* about twelve hundred yards from the Adhaim, from the west. No signs had been seen of enemy reinforcements or of General Thomson's force and no opposition had been encountered. This message showed that our cavalry had got in rear of the Turkish 14th Division, who, however, still continued to oppose the advance of the 38th Brigade.

Under a heavy though inaccurate rifle and machine gun fire, the King's Own and South Lancashire gradually got level with the North Lancashire, when all three battalions advanced together, gaining ground by short rushes. It soon became evident that the Turks were retiring and by 9.30 a.m. the Lancashire brigade had rushed the enemy's line, capturing about seventy prisoners. In the meantime the 102nd Grenadiers had been advancing with their right on the western bank of the Adhaim, while two companies 4th South Wales Borderers and two howitzers, having started from the Adhaim mouth at 6 a.m., were moving up the eastern bank.

About 8 a.m. the 7th Cavalry Brigade and "V" Battery, R.H.A., advancing eastward, had come into contact with the leading troops of the Turkish 2nd Division, apparently moving southward to reinforce their 14th Division; and the 2nd Division guns opened on the 13th Lancers on the left of our cavalry brigade. A little later the Turkish 14th Division began to evacuate its position and, unaware of the presence of our cavalry in its rear, formed up in close formation, thus giving "V" Battery, R.H.A., excellent targets. Realising then, however, that its line of retreat was cut, the Turkish 14th Division moved rapidly to the eastward and, reaching the river depression, began fording the Adhaim out of sight, under cover of the fire of two of its batteries which came into action on the eastern bank. But, as it emerged on the opposite side of the river, the long 14th Division column again came under the

fire of "V" Battery and this was seen to cause much confusion in the Turkish ranks. "V" Battery, however, had only four guns, and at this moment two of them had to be diverted to the left of the 7th Cavalry Brigade to engage the Turkish 2nd Division, whose infantry and guns continued to advance. Both guns and machine guns of the 7th Cavalry Brigade got excellent targets, though at long ranges; but, under a converging fire themselves and with the Turkish 2nd Division threatening their left, our cavalry felt that it was not only impracticable to continue their advance eastward, but that it was necessary for them to withdraw westward. This they did, apparently without difficulty, taking up a position to cover the British left flank and bringing back with them about eighty prisoners and a number of captured horses and pack mules. In the meantime, General Thomson had sent some infantry in Ford vans to support the cavalry, but recalled these on receiving orders from General Marshall to take up a defensive position on the left of the 38th Brigade.

After capturing the position held by the Turkish 14th Division the 38th Brigade made no further advance and, getting into touch with General Thomson's force to its left, remained in readiness to meet the reported advance of the Turkish 2nd Division. By 10.30 a.m. the Turkish 14th Division was in full retreat; and the 2nd Division, showing no signs of advancing further, took up a position on both sides of Tulul en Nor, where it remained under observation by our 7th Cavalry Brigade. It was by this hour very hot and our troops, especially those in General Thomson's force who had done much marching recently, were very tired. General Marshall decided to halt; and the infantry of his main column took up a defensive line with their right on the Adhaim and with the two companies of the 4th South Wales Borderers and two howitzers opposite them on the eastern bank.

From 11 a.m. onwards Generals Maude and Marshall exchanged a number of messages, of which only those from General Maude are given in the records. Consequently the contents of those from General Marshall can only be surmised from the tenour of General Maude's messages and from the action taken. At 11.5 a.m. General Maude asked if General Marshall was sufficiently strong to deal decisively with the Turkish XIII Corps now that it was more or less concentrated; and if he would like the brigade of General Cobbe's column, which was moving back to Istabulat, placed at his disposal.* At 12.35 p.m. General Maude suggested, with reference

* General Marshall accepted the offer of these troops.

to a message from General Marshall which apparently described the situation, that, as the Turkish 14th Division evidently did not mean to accept battle and was falling back on the 2nd Division, it seemed likely that the enemy had heard of the retreat of his XVIII Corps and intended to retire during the night. General Marshall should, therefore, press him vigorously, and hold him to his ground or at least inflict on him as severe casualties as possible. At 1.10 p.m. General Maude telegraphed that there seemed little doubt that the enemy was contemplating retreat that night towards Band-i-Adhaim and that General Marshall should, therefore, be prepared to follow him up next day, if he was not successful in holding the enemy to his ground that evening, and forcing him to accept battle either that evening or next morning. In continuation of this message, General Maude telegraphed at 2.48 p.m. saying that, should General Marshall not succeed in beating the enemy decisively before he retreated, it was important that his pursuit should be so close as to follow the enemy into Band-i-Adhaim before he could entrench there. General Marshall appeared to have sufficient transport, though it might require rapid readjustment; and if it facilitated matters he might withdraw to Sindiya the detachment at Tijdari, as this was no longer required in such an advanced position.

At 6.30 p.m. after a personal reconnaissance, which led him to the opinion that the Turks would retire during the night, General Marshall issued his orders for next day's operations. After giving the enemy's estimated situation and saying that General Cobbe's column was detaching a brigade group to Barura, the order said that General Marshall's column was to continue operations against the Turkish XIII Corps and deal with it decisively. The 2nd and 8th Field Batteries (13th Brigade) and section C/69th Battery, which had all reached Sindiya that day from Baquba, and the Hertfordshire Yeomanry squadron were to join the detachment of South Wales Borderers and section C/69th Battery on the east bank of the Adhaim opposite Dahuba next morning; and the 40th Brigade (less South Wales Borderers) from Sindiya was to take over the Barura and Adhaim defences, thus enabling the 1/2nd and 2/9th Gurkhas and section 44th Field Battery to rejoin the main column.

At 6.30 p.m. General Marshall received an aeroplane report saying that the Turkish 2nd Division was withdrawing northward.

During the 24th April the total casualties of General Marshall's column on the Adhaim amounted to 111.* But those of the Turks amounted to many more, as we captured about 160 prisoners in addition to finding a large number of their dead on that and the next day; and we took much equipment. Our advanced detachment about Tijdari had been confronted during the day by a Turkish demonstration from the vicinity of Delli Abbas; and as this detachment was serving no useful purpose at Tijdari, it was withdrawn after dark to the line Abu Tamar–Sindiya. The 134th Howitzer Brigade from General Cobbe's column also rejoined General Marshall's main column that evening.

At 9.30 p.m. General Maude sent General Marshall the following reply to a message which is not recorded:—

> "As enemy appears to be withdrawing as anticipated to-night and you are not in a position to follow him closely, there is no object in calling on troops for unusual exertion. But you are to move as early as practicable and secure Band-i-Adhaim. The earlier you can do this the better, so as to give Turks less time to prepare. Report when you will be ready to move."

General Marshall was apparently unable, owing to the great heat, the necessity for concentrating greater strength and the shortage of motor transport and tyres, to move as early or as rapidly as General Maude desired; for at 6.50 a.m. on the 25th April the latter telegraphed to General Marshall:—

> "Move as you suggest. I do not want to make unreasonable calls on troops and am quite satisfied to leave exact distances to your judgment. Enemy have had most strenuous time lately and are pretty tired from all accounts. Again, XIII Corps will have their tails down after their two aimless advances. If we occupy Band-i-Adhaim it will probably make enemy evacuate Kifri and line of Diyala and so clear our northern flank for summer. Am anxious to do this and get troops settled down before intense heat begins."

Following an advanced guard composed of the 7th Cavalry and 35th Infantry Brigades with a proportion of artillery, the main body of General Marshall's column commenced its march up the western side of the Adhaim at 9.30 a.m. on the 25th April. Owing to the heat, the order for the march laid down that it was to be carried out with a minimum of

* This figure is taken from the IIIrd Corps "A" war diary and is less than the figures given in brigade and unit diaries.

discomfort to the troops, greater distances than usual being maintained between formations and units, and longer halts than normal being made. No opposition was encountered, but it was very hot ; and after marching seven or eight miles the column went into bivouac about Tulul en Nor. The detachment east of the Adhaim came up level with General Marshall after dark.

During the day, the 8th Infantry Brigade, 4th Brigade, R.F.A. (7th, 14th and B/69th Batteries), and half 20th Company Sappers and Miners, after a march of twenty-one miles—a fine performance in the heat prevailing—arrived in the Barura peninsula after crossing the Sinija bridge. On their arrival, the 40th Brigade and B/69th Battery received orders to join General Marshall's main column next day.

The 40th Brigade had been prevented from moving forward earlier, owing to difficulties of supply ; and for the same reason the 8th Infantry Brigade was left behind at the Barura peninsula.

General Marshall was desirous of increasing his artillery strength for his coming fight with the Turkish 2nd and 14th Divisions. His intention was, on getting close to the Turks, to reconnoitre, register and arrange for artillery ammunition reserves so as to subject the enemy to heavy artillery fire. The Turkish XIII Corps had not yet experienced concentrated bombardment from British guns with aerial direction, and General Marshall thought that such bombardment would punish the enemy heavily.

On the 26th April General Marshall's column continued its movement towards Band-i-Adhaim, but, in order to allow supplies to catch it up, halted and bivouacked near the Adhaim, opposite Satha ruins. No opposition was encountered but several Turkish stragglers were captured. It was again very hot ; the country was bare and open ; owing to the strength of the mirage the troops had to march on compass bearings ; and tributary watercourses frequently necessitated wide detours. There was, however, plenty of water available and this with the short marches did men and animals much good after their recent exertions. That day the 40th Brigade reached Dahuba.

The enemy was located holding a position astride the river about six miles south of Band-i-Adhaim,* his strength being estimated at 270 sabres, 35 guns and 5,500 rifles. In the afternoon the 14th Lancers with a section of "V" Battery,

* See Map 33.

R.H.A., moved out to push in the enemy's advanced troops, thus enabling General Thomson to reconnoitre a forward line for his brigade (35th) and some artillery to occupy during the night as a position to cover General Marshall's attack dispositions. This position, some two miles south of the enemy's trenches, was occupied by 6 a.m. on the 27th by the 13th Lancers, 35th Infantry Brigade, twelve guns and howitzers of the 55th Field Artillery Brigade and the four 60-pounders of the 2/104th Battery, under the command of General Thomson. The right of the line rested on a bluff on the eastern bank of the Adhaim and passed through a marked hillock in the river-bed which was christened "The Island." It had been intended that General Thomson's guns should shell the enemy's camps and transport, but low visibility and aeroplane failure (through engine trouble) rendered this impossible.

The enemy's position was reconnoitred and a report was sent in to General Marshall that the eastern side of the Adhaim offered the greater facilities for attack. The river crossing-places were reconnoitred and improved; and after dark two battalions of the 38th Brigade moved over and joined the detachment on the east side of the Adhaim. During the day the enemy showed little activity beyond some artillery firing.

General Maude had received reliable information that the Turks had withdrawn about 800 rifles and 4 guns from Delli Abbas the previous day, probably to reinforce their force at Band-i-Adhaim, where they might be expected on the 28th. General Maude sent word of this to General Marshall early on the 27th April and added that as this meant that only a small Turkish detachment was left at Delli Abbas, General Marshall could safely reinforce his main column from Sindiya if he wished to do so.

The distribution of General Marshall's column was now as follows:—

Main Column.—(Riverhead–Barura; line of communication west bank Adhaim.)

(*a*) *Moving up Adhaim.*—

- Column headquarters.
- 7th Cavalry Brigade (less 13th Hussars), squadron Hertfordshire Yeomanry and "V" Battery, R.H.A.
- 55th Brigade, R.F.A. (A, B, C and D/55th and A and B/69th Batteries).
- 13th Brigade, R.F.A. (2nd, 8th, 44th and C/69th Batteries).
- 134th Howitzer Brigade, R.F.A.

2/104th Battery, R.G.A.
35th Infantry Brigade (1/5th Buffs, 102nd Grenadiers 1/2nd, 2/4th and 2/9th Gurkhas and three sections 185th and two sections 187th Machine Gun Companies).
38th Infantry Brigade.
40th Infantry Brigade.
Two sections, 71st Company, R.E.
Administrative units.

(*b*) *Defences.*—

(i). *Staging posts at Dahuba and Satha.*

Twelve sabres (7th Cavalry Brigade).
Two sections of a field battery (4th Brigade, R.F.A.).
37th Dogras; One section 185th Machine Gun Company } (35th Infantry Brigade).

(ii). *Tigris line (left bank) from two miles east of Adhaim mouth to opposite Darawish island.**

One and a third field batteries (4th Brigade, R.F.A.).
No. 80 Anti-Aircraft Section.
71st Company, R.E. (less two sections).
Half 20th Company, Sappers and Miners.
8th Infantry Brigade (less one battalion).
Administrative units.

General Cayley's Force.—(Riverhead–Sindiya.)

For the defence of Diltawa–Abu Tamar–Sindiya line and of Tigris line (left bank) from Sindiya to two miles east of Adhaim mouth.—

Cavalry Division headquarters.
6th Cavalry Brigade (less 21st and 22nd Cavalry).
13th Hussars (7th Cavalry Brigade).
" S " Battery, R.H.A.
13th Division headquarters.
66th Brigade, R.F.A. (A, B, C, and one section D/66th and 72nd Batteries).
72nd and 88th Companies, R.E.
39th Infantry Brigade.
Proportion of cavalry and infantry divisional units.

On the 28th April the detachment with the main column on the east side of the Adhaim moved forward and dug itself in on a line level with General Thomson's force, thus securing ground for artillery positions on that bank; and Column

* In the Tigris, about twelve miles upstream of the Adhaim mouth.

headquarters with the remainder of the force advanced from the Satha bivouac to another bivouac four miles farther up the west bank of the river. It was still very hot, and owing to this our aeroplanes were unable to fly. During the afternoon the Turkish artillery showed considerable activity; and at dusk the 40th Infantry Brigade, which had reached the front that day, was sent over to the east side of the river to relieve the two battalions of the 38th Brigade there.

During the night 28th/29th our artillery dug in in their allotted positions. But on the 29th April a strong wind and continuous dust storm rendered visibility so low that bombardment by those guns which had already registered, and patrolling, were only carried out with great difficulty. Our aeroplanes were unable to co-operate with our artillery until 3.30 p.m., when registration was continued and completed by dusk.

The enemy's position lay astride the Adhaim, which flowed here through a somewhat deep depression of varying width, with steep, and in places cliff-like, banks. The ground to east and west was open, bare and flat, except for occasional mounds and several tributary dry water-courses. The Turkish force holding this position was understood to consist of the 2nd and 14th Divisions, with an estimated strength of 270 sabres, 6,000 rifles and 39 guns; the 14th Division being located on the east side, and the 2nd Division on the west side, of the river. General Marshall, who had a weak cavalry brigade, three infantry brigades—their units much below full establishment—and 64 guns, made all arrangements on the 29th to attack the enemy next morning, intending first to attack and destroy the 14th Division east of the Adhaim and then deal with the 2nd Division.* It should be noted that General Marshall was weaker than the enemy in infantry strength.† It was his intention to utilise to the full his superiority in artillery.

By 7 p.m. on the 29th April General Marshall's troops were disposed as follows. East of the river, the 40th Infantry Brigade held a line from "Three Ridges" to the river bank

* It was believed that the 14th Division was much demoralised and could be destroyed and dispersed without difficulty, after which it would be easy to deal with the 2nd Division.

† Orders had been received on the 28th April opening leave, and General Marshall insisted that the leave parties of officers and men should not take part in the fighting on the 30th. This concession was much appreciated, and, in the circumstances, added to the confidence of all ranks both in General Marshall's leadership and in their own capacity to defeat the enemy.

with the four batteries of the 13th Field Artillery Brigade in different positions in rear; on the west side the 35th Infantry Brigade held a line extending for about four thousand yards westward from "The Island" with the six batteries of the 55th Field Artillery Brigade and the 2/104th Battery of 60-pounders in rear of it; the twelve howitzers of the 134th Brigade, R.F.A., were in position in the depression south of "The Island"; and the 38th Infantry Brigade was concentrated in the depression on the east side of the river to the left rear of the 40th Brigade. The 13th Lancers were on the west side of the depression, the remainder of the 7th Cavalry Brigade (less 13th Hussars) being on the east side south of the 40th Brigade.

The 38th Infantry Brigade was to march at 8 p.m. and take up a position of deployment facing westward with its left 1,500 yards north-east of "Three Ridges," where it was to remain till 5 a.m. on the 30th; and our artillery was to maintain an intermittent bombardment of the whole Turkish position throughout the night. There was to be an artillery bombardment and barrage of the enemy's east bank trenches from 5 a.m. to 5.36 a.m.; and at 5 a.m. the 38th and 40th Infantry Brigades were to advance and carry the enemy's east bank position. The 35th Infantry Brigade was to form a strong left flank and be prepared to counter any offensive by the enemy on the west bank, and its right battalion was to work along the west bank cliff to get a footing on an underfeature nicknamed "The Boot" by reason of its resemblance in plan to the shape of a top-boot. After 5.36 a.m. field batteries would be at the call of infantry brigades; and counter-battery work and distant targets would be dealt with by the "Counter Battery Group" as required.

The 7th Cavalry Brigade (less two regiments and its field troop) was to move during the night round the right flank so as to operate next morning against the enemy's line of retreat, the 13th Lancers being placed under General Thomson's orders to operate on his left flank on the west bank of the river. A water convoy of twenty-three carts, escorted by the Hertfordshire Yeomanry squadron and the 7th Cavalry Brigade Field Troop, was to move at 5 a.m. to a position in rear of the 38th Brigade and obtain orders from that brigade headquarters.

During the night hostile patrols were active, but after a short postponement of its movement for this reason the 38th Brigade deployed without opposition on the line indicated; and at 5 a.m. on the 30th April the 38th and 40th Brigades

advanced to the attack under cover of our artillery bombardment, which afforded them most accurate and effective support. The 38th Brigade, with the centre of its three front line battalions (King's Own, South Lancashire and East Lancashire) directed on a redoubt known as "The Mound," met with no great opposition and by 5.30 a.m. had captured this redoubt having suffered only slight casualties.

"The Mound" had been reported as the left of the enemy's main line. But it was found that the Turks were only holding it lightly as an advanced position and that they had dug another line in rear, as well as to the northward of it. On reaching "The Mound" the 38th Brigade came under a heavy fire from the north, whence a counter attack also threatened. Taking ground to their right, the three Lancashire battalions were just in time to stop this Turkish attack. The 38th Brigade was then subjected to a heavy shell and rifle fire, as well as an enfilading machine gun fire coming from low mounds to the west. These mounds were part of a low ridge which hid the advance of the 40th Brigade from the 38th Brigade.

The 40th Brigade, with the 4th South Wales Borderers and the 8th Cheshire in front line (in that order from the right), getting good cover from the smoke and dust caused by the barrage, advanced very rapidly and carried the enemy's first line without a check. Then pushing on, but without suffering many casualties, they overran the enemy's second line and the Cheshire entered Adhaim village at about 5.40 a.m. About 300 Turks surrendered and the remainder seemed to be all retreating precipitately. The brigade orders for the attack had contained instructions that the enemy's first and second lines were to be consolidated immediately after capture and that the Cheshire were to clear the village as opportunity offered. But the enemy troops before them seemed to be so broken and demoralised that the Cheshire disregarded these instructions and pushed on. It is noteworthy in this connection that their commanding officer and adjutant had both been wounded before this happened. In advancing through the rough and broken ground immediately south of the village, platoons and companies had become disorganised. But the bulk of the battalion pushed on straight through the village in hot pursuit of the retreating Turks for about half a mile to where the cliff-like banks of the depression faced north, and captured six Turkish guns.

To the right of the Cheshire, the South Wales Borderers had also overrun the enemy's second line. But this was by

mistake, as they had moved through a gap in the line without noticing the trench.* Reaching the track leading eastward from the village they observed the Cheshire well in advance on their left ; and, thinking they had not yet reached the enemy's second line, they pushed on to get into touch with the Cheshire, capturing a mountain gun. In this advance, the two companies on the left inclined westward towards the Cheshire, but the other two halted on the east of the track leading north, close to some enemy gunpits. Between them, the Cheshire and Borderers had taken over 700 prisoners and four machine guns. The telephone wire with the Borderers had run out about three-quarters of a mile back and had not yet reached them again. They were also getting short of ammunition.

About 6.15 a.m. Turkish guns, as well as their machine guns, on " The Boot " opened a heavy cross fire on the Cheshire and the Borderers in the area north of the village. The accounts of what happened here for the next two hours or so are not very clear ; but it appears that many of the Cheshire and the two left companies of the Borderers took up rather a scattered line to the northward of Adhaim village, facing westward, while others took cover in deep, dry water-courses which ran down into the river bed. The 5th Wiltshire, supporting the Cheshire and Borderers, had by this time occupied the late Turkish first line.

It was apparently not till about 7 a.m. that 40th Brigade headquarters learnt that the Cheshire and Borderers had advanced beyond the village, but, as soon as he realised this, General Lewin, commanding the brigade, ordered the Wiltshire and the 8th Royal Welch Fusiliers to push forward in support. He heard also at the same time from the 35th Brigade that the Turkish 14th Division was in full retreat. Most unfortunately, however, just before 7 a.m., a sudden dust storm had blotted out from the sight of the remainder of the force the whole area in which the Cheshire and Borderers were ; telephone communication with them had not been restored ; and our artillery in support had practically to cease firing.

In the meantime the 7th Cavalry Brigade† and " V " Battery, R.H.A., on the east bank of the river, starting as soon

* They advanced on a bearing of 330°, which should have brought them to a strong point in the Turkish second line. But the map from which the bearing was taken proved inaccurate and they passed east of the strong point, not noticing it in the dust.

† Consisting only of 14th Lancers, about 150 strong, and machine gun squadron.

as it was light enough to see, had reached, about 5 a.m., a position some miles north of the 38th Infantry Brigade. From here, a little later, they pushed in to engage considerable bodies of enemy troops, which they could see retiring northward along the east bank of the river.

On the west bank of the river the 102nd Grenadiers of the 35th Brigade had occupied by 5 a.m. a line about six hundred yards short of the Turkish first line, and had thrown back their left to face north-west and west. The 2/4th and 2/9th Gurkhas were by "The Island," and the 1/5th Buffs and 1/2nd Gurkhas were in brigade reserve. Advancing at 5 a.m. towards "The Boot," the 2/9th Gurkhas reached what appeared to be the remains of an ancient dam, where they gained touch with the 102nd Grenadiers to their left, but beyond which they were unable to advance, owing to the heavy rifle and machine gun fire from "The Boot."

At 6.50 a.m. General Marshall reported to General Maude:—

> "Visibility is very bad owing to dust storm, but situation appears to be developing into complete withdrawal of Turks. Our infantry is advancing all along the line and artillery moving up in their support. Prisoners are being sent in. No aeroplanes able to get up in high wind to-day."

And at 7.35 a.m. he reported:—

> "Dust storm is getting worse and visibility is little more than four hundred yards here. Enemy was still holding "The Boot" and trenches to its westward at 7 a.m. Special artillery bombardment of "The Boot" in progress. 38th Brigade on our right reports long column of enemy in retreat with our cavalry on their flank."

Not long after this, however, the Turks launched a counter-attack against the Cheshire and South Wales Borderers, which checked the British advance completely. This counter-attack, carried out apparently by the 1st Regiment of the Turkish 2nd Division and advancing under cover of the dust storm, took the Cheshire and left half-battalion of the Borderers by surprise, being directed against both their flanks. With their rear threatened, in a position which was swept by hostile gun fire from the northward and by machine gun fire from "The Boot," and deprived by the dust storm of all chance of supporting artillery fire, these six companies received orders from the senior officer present to retire through the village to the captured Turkish second line. Scattered and somewhat disorganised as they were, this was no easy task; but it was

carried out successfully, though only after severe hand-to-hand fighting and with considerable losses, including many men cut off and captured.

Before the dust storm swept over the area, the right half-battalion of the Borderers saw some Turkish infantry advancing from the northward, but some distance away. It had no telephonic communication with its brigade and most of its messengers had been hit. But expecting ammunition and support to reach it shortly from its own and the 38th Brigades, the officer commanding it decided that the detachment should remain where it was. About 7.30 a.m. the Turks, whose advance hitherto had been rather hesitating, were seen to be coming on in a solid line against the Borderers' front and right; and the enemy continued to advance, apparently suffering heavy casualties, until about 8.15 a.m. They had now got within a very short distance of the right of the Borderers, who had run out of ammunition and, being without artillery or other support, had no option but to retire. This they did, reaching the village rapidly, and successfully out-distancing the Turks who seem to have been too tired to follow them quickly. The Turks regained the village and attempted to push on beyond it to their lost second line. But the Wiltshire, Welch Fusiliers and the 40th Brigade Machine Gun Company had by this time occupied this line and with the remnants of the Cheshire and Borderers, who rallied here, beat off all attempts of the Turks to advance south of the village. The enemy had retaken all but one of his lost guns and about 400 of the prisoners.

During this fighting the 38th Brigade was still engaged with the enemy to the north of "The Mound," being quite unaware of the Turkish counter-attack against the 40th Brigade. Our artillery also had been unable to afford assistance to the 40th Brigade; but after a time some of our guns managed to shell Adhaim village and this proved effective. For at about 10 a.m. the Turks began to evacuate the village, a general enemy movement northward from it being also reported about the same hour by the 35th Brigade on the west bank of the river.

In the meantime orders had been sent to the 38th Brigade to advance and seize the river bank. General O'Dowda, who was still unaware of the reverse suffered by the 40th Brigade, went up towards his front line to reconnoitre. As a result he reported that his infantry, under enfilade machine gun fire from the westward, were engaged with the enemy in a strong position to the northward and that the cavalry

reported enemy working round his right flank.* In these circumstances an advance by his weak numbers would be very difficult. He was told in reply to remain where he was and take steps to protect his right.

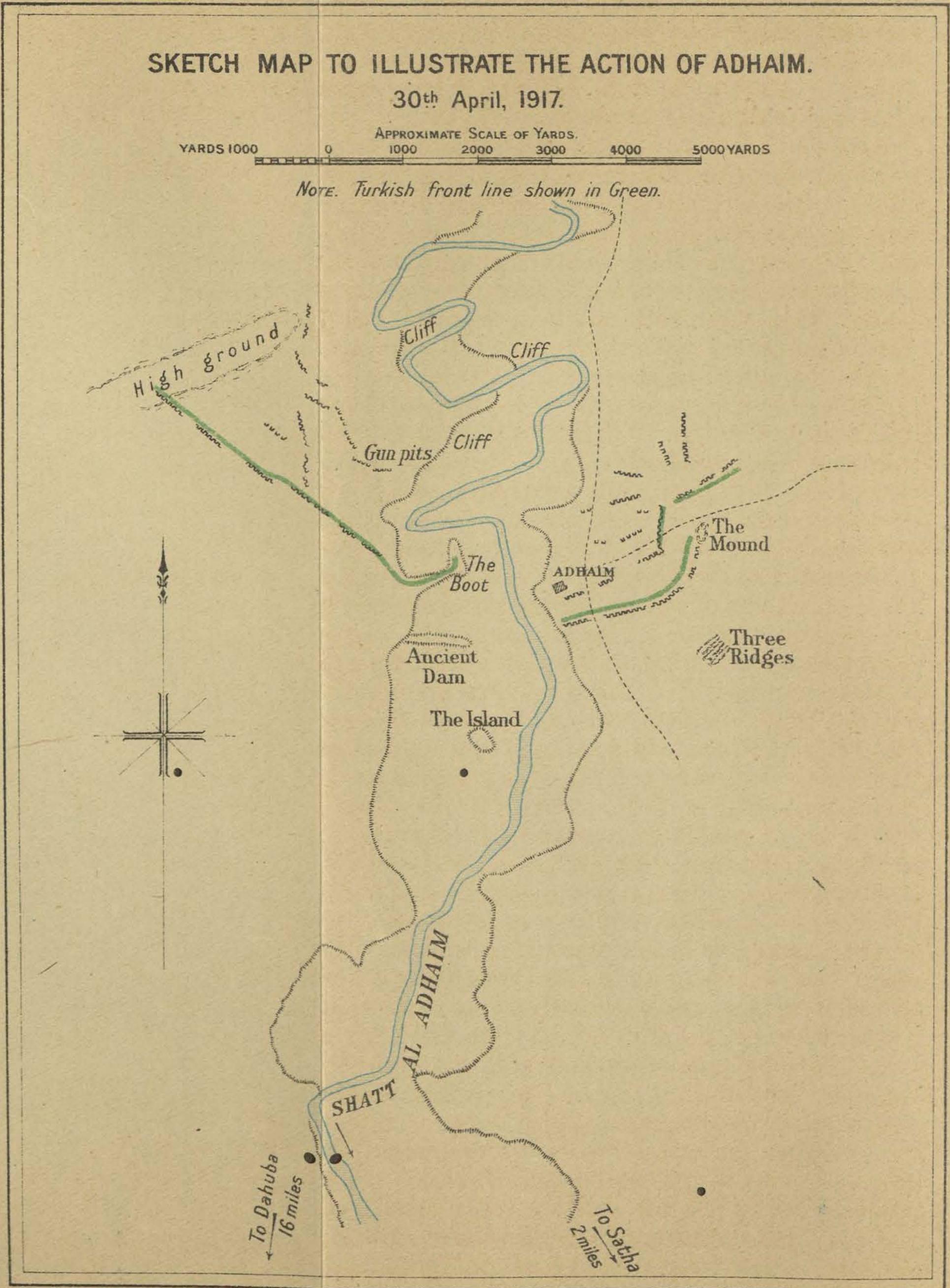
Between 7.0 and 10.0 a.m. " The Boot " was subjected to a heavy artillery bombardment. But this seemed to have little effect. About 7.0 a.m. two companies 2/4th Gurkhas were sent forward to prolong the right of the 2/9th Gurkhas and dug themselves in there in the open ground of the river bed, where they came under considerable enfilade fire from the eastern bank ; and at 8 a.m. the remainder of the 2/4th Gurkhas were sent up to support the 2/9th Gurkhas. But no more progress could be made.

From 10 a.m. onwards the British infantry remained practically stationary. The 38th Brigade was under considerable gun and machine gun fire ; the 40th Brigade, with two of its battalions badly shattered, was in no condition to resume the offensive ; and the strong enemy position on and adjacent to " The Boot " seemed unaffected by artillery bombardment. On our right, the 7th Cavalry Brigade had got astride the enemy's line of retreat early in the morning ; but being weak in numbers had been forced back to the eastward when the enemy deployed infantry, supported by artillery, against it.

After midday, the Turks opened fire with all natures of artillery from positions northward of " The Mound " ; and soon after this the wind dropped and the dust began to subside. The Turks were then seen to be moving large numbers of their infantry north-eastward into the foothills of the Jabal Hamrin. Marching, about three thousand yards away, across the front of the 38th Brigade, this movement was well covered by flank guards equipped with many machine guns and guns ; and, as " The Boot " and its vicinity were still strongly held, it might be preliminary to a counterstroke against the 38th Brigade right. In view of such a possibility the 1/2nd Gurkhas from the 35th Brigade and the 134th Howitzer Brigade were moved across, between 2.0 and 3.0 p.m., to the eastern bank of the river. But no such counter-attack materialised.

By 4.0 p.m. the air had so cleared that our aeroplanes were able to carry out reconnaissance work once more ; and when darkness fell the enemy were still holding " The Boot " and positions northward of " The Mound." General Marshall proposed to attack and capture " The Boot " after dark ; but it became unnecessary, as the Turks withdrew during the night and their whole force retired into the Jabal Hamrin.

* This report was contradicted some time later.



PREPARED IN THE HISTORICAL SECTION OF THE COMMITTEE OF IMPERIAL DEFENCE

Ordnance Survey, 1925.

Our casualties during the day totalled 692, to which the 40th Brigade contributed 368, the 38th Brigade 215 and the 2/4th and 2/9th Gurkhas of the 35th Brigade 82. The 4th South Wales Borderers lost 206 (including 108 missing) out of a strength of 340 and the 8th Cheshire 137 (including 51 missing) out of 330. As practically all the battalions engaged were very weak in strength, these losses were severe. On the other hand, the Turks must have lost more, for we took 365 prisoners and buried over 200 of their dead.* It was held at the time by Generals Maude and Marshall that, but for the occurrence of the dust-storm, the enemy losses would have been very much heavier; and it certainly seems that, but for the adverse weather conditions, General Marshall's victory would have been much more decisive. These weather conditions neutralised the superiority of the British artillery, which General Marshall had intended to utilise to the full.

On the morning of the 1st May, the 7th Cavalry Brigade started off in pursuit of the enemy, while the remainder of the column reorganised and cleared the battlefield. But it was not General Maude's intention to follow the Turks into the hills and, beyond a heavy bombardment of the retreating enemy by our aeroplanes, the pursuit was stopped. Next day the column withdrew to disperse into their summer quarters.

Many reports from various sources had been received during April regarding Turkish intentions. It was said that Enver Pasha had declared that Baghdad would be retaken and that towards the end of March he had paid a visit to Berlin to ask for German assistance. It was also said that General Mackensen was sent to Constantinople in April to advise on the military situation and that a decision had been come to there that no offensive in Mesopotamia should be undertaken for the time being, but rather that the Turkish Sixth Army should withdraw towards Mosul. It was estimated that the total numerical strength of the Turkish field armies still amounted to nearly 600,000 with a further 500,000 men available as potential reserves. But these reserves included races of much less military value than the Turk; desertions from them when called up were not likely to be less than those from the existing field armies; and these were known to come to a considerable figure.†

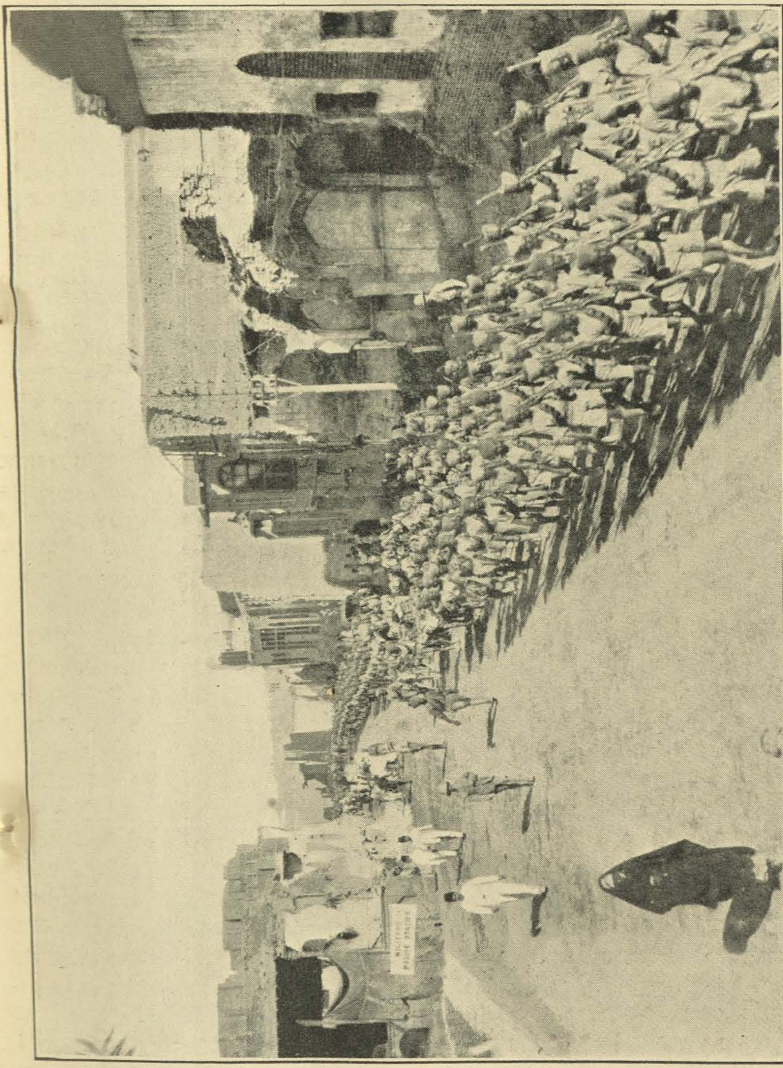
* The commander of the 14th Turkish Division, reported to have been a German, had a narrow escape from capture and was soon afterwards said to have been relieved of his command.

† For instance, the 166th and 181st Regiments were said to have lost three-fifths of their strength owing to desertions during their movement from Constantinople to the Tigris in March–April, 1917.

Although two or three Turkish divisions were said to be on their way to reinforce their Sixth Army, there was considerable uncertainty regarding them ; more especially as it was doubtful if the Turks yet appreciated how much the Revolution had affected the fighting capacity of the Russian Caucasus Army. At the end of April General Raddatz's force on the Diyala seems to have been contained by about 2,300 cavalry and infantry and twelve guns of the Turkish XIII Corps. But on the 22nd/23rd April Generals Pavloff and Raddatz had a conference at Baghdad with General Maude, when he promised the Russians assistance in the form of two months' supplies, if they would advance and occupy the Kifri–Qara Tepe line. It was considered doubtful, however, if they would or could do this ; and on the 25th April the Chief of the Imperial General Staff telegraphed to General Maude that, in view of probable Russian inactivity, no British troops would be withdrawn from Mesopotamia until the situation altered materially in our favour.

The operations during April 1917 are a good example of what can be effected by a mobile force acting on interior lines against enemy forces on exterior lines. The two Turkish army corps had been driven so far apart that, being without good lateral communications, they would have considerable difficulty in combining their operations against our force on the Tigris ; and this, taken in conjunction with the losses they had recently suffered, seemed to render it unlikely that they would attempt a serious offensive for some time. Their XIII Corps had twice during the month encountered defeat while attempting to take the offensive and their XVIII Corps had been driven out of its selected positions on four occasions. In addition to having inflicted severe casualties on them in killed and wounded, we had captured during April about 3,000 prisoners and 17 guns, besides large quantities of munitions, stores and equipment.

During the last three weeks or so the heat had been very great, the daily maximum averaging at least 110° Fahrenheit in the shade ; there had been constant dust-storms ; and water had generally been difficult to obtain. In these circumstances the operations had imposed a severe strain upon officers and men. " But," as General Maude said in his despatch, " as conditions became more trying the spirit of the troops seemed to rise, and to the end of this period they maintained the same high standard of discipline, gallantry in action and endurance, which had been so noticeable throughout the army during the operations which led up to the fall of Baghdad and subsequently."



Indian Infantry, Baghdad.

From the distribution statement given in Appendix XXXIX it will be seen that on the 30th April, 1917, General Maude had on the "Tigris Front" a total of 7¼ cavalry regiments, 57 infantry battalions and 174 guns (excluding anti-aircraft). This included the 42nd Brigade of the 15th Division, which, preceding the remainder of the division, had reached the Baghdad area during April. On the "Euphrates Front" were half a cavalry regiment, 5 infantry battalions and 24 guns; and on the "Karun Front" 1 cavalry regiment, 2 infantry battalions and 4 guns. One cavalry regiment, 15 infantry battalions and 11 guns were employed on the "Tigris Defences"; and on the "Euphrates Defences" 1 cavalry regiment, 4 infantry battalions and 4 guns, besides 2 armoured trains. Two infantry battalions and 4 guns, just arrived in the country, were temporarily in Basra; and 4¼ Indian infantry battalions were employed on non-combatant duties on the lines of communication.

Very noticeable in this statement is the large number of administrative units; and they afford some idea of how well-found and well-equipped the force was, especially in contrast with the state of affairs prevailing twelve months previously. In this connection it is also noteworthy that during April the conversion to metre-gauge of the Qurna-Amara railway had been completed; and that work had commenced on metre-gauge railways connecting Basra with Qurna and Kut with Baghdad.

In his letters to relations and to General Whigham, written at the end of April, General Maude referred frequently to the unusual heat, which was, he said, 21 degrees above the average for April, 1916, and which was bound to stop operations shortly. He had already begun to let officers and men go out of the country on leave, which many of them required badly as they had been in the country a long time. There had been, he said, the usual crop of Arab incidents; and he found that fining them was a more effective punishment than burning or shelling their villages. He had, however, to keep mobile columns ready at various centres to deal with them, as immediate action was essential; it being found that the Arabs regarded inaction as weakness and took advantage of it to become more aggressive. All the information he had recently received showed that the Turks were sending back all their stores, etc., to Kifri and Kirkuk on the one side and to Tikrit and Mosul on the other. From this he judged that it only required a little offensive action by the Russians—which was unfortunately not forthcoming—to make the Turks evacuate the whole of the Mosul

area with its rich crops and plentiful supplies. Owing to the Russian attitude, he would have to begin, after settling down for the hot weather, to get ready to deal later on with larger Turkish forces. While regretting that such a diversion of force from the decisive theatre of operations should be necessary, he was confident that he could make adequate preparations if he was kept sufficiently supplied with men, munitions and stores. As regards food supplies he was still hard at work developing the local resources, though he had not yet been able to tap the rich districts round Hilla and Karbala. For this it was important to keep the necessary communications open from Arab marauders and he was accordingly arranging for Arab levies, who for this work would be armed and paid by us.

APPENDIX XXXI.

Order of Battle of the IIIrd Indian Army Corps (Tigris Corps) on the 15th July, 1916.

COMMANDER:

Lieutenant-General F. S. Maude.

3rd (Lahore) DIVISION.

(Major-General H. d'U. Keary.)

INFANTRY.

7th Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General S. R. Davidson.)	1st Connaught Rangers. 27th Punjabis. 89th Punjabis. 96th Infantry.
8th Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General S. M. Edwardes.)	1st Manchester Regiment. 4th Rajputs. 47th Sikhs. 59th Rifles.
9th Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General L. W. Y. Campbell.)	1st Highland Light Infantry. 93rd Burma Infantry. 1/1st Gurkhas. 1/9th Gurkhas.

ENGINEERS AND PIONEERS.

20th Field Company, Sappers and Miners.
21st Field Company, Sappers and Miners.
34th Sikh Pioneers.

SIGNAL UNIT.

3rd Divisional Signal Company.

ARTILLERY.

(C.R.A.—Brig.-General F. S. Stallard.)

4th Brigade, R.F.A. (7th, 14th and 66th Batteries) .. .. B/69th Howitzer Battery, R.F.A.	22 guns.

3rd Division Ammunition Column.

ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS.

Nos. 7 and 8 British Field Ambulances.
Nos. 111, 112, 113 Indian Field Ambulances.
No. 3 Sanitary Section.
Mobile Veterinary Section.
3rd Divisional Supply Column.
3rd Divisional Troops Transport Company.
7th, 8th and 9th Brigade Transport Companies.

TROOPS ATTACHED TO 3rd DIVISION.

4th Cavalry.

"A" and "C" Batteries, 55th Brigade, R.F.A. (13th Division) .. C/66th Battery, R.F.A. (13th Division)	12 guns.

13th DIVISION.

(Brig.-General W. de S. Cayley.)

INFANTRY.

38th Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General J. W. O'Dowda.)
- 6th King's Own Royal Regiment (Lancaster).
- 6th East Lancashire Regiment.
- 6th Prince of Wales's Volunteers (South Lancashire).
- 6th Loyal Regiment (North Lancashire).

39th Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General T. A. Andrus.)
- 9th Royal Warwickshire Regiment.
- 7th Gloucestershire Regiment.
- 9th Worcestershire Regiment.
- 7th North Staffordshire Regiment.

40th Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General A. C. Lewin.)
- 8th Cheshire Regiment.
- 8th Royal Welch Fusiliers.
- 4th South Wales Borderers.
- 5th Wiltshire Regiment.

ENGINEERS AND PIONEERS.

71st, 72nd and 88th Field Companies, R.E.
8th Welch Regiment (Pioneers).

SIGNAL UNIT.

13th Divisional Signal Company.

CAVALRY.

"D" Squadron, 1/1st Hertfordshire Yeomanry.

ARTILLERY.

(C.R.A.—Brig.-General F. E. L. Barker.)

66th Brigade, R.F.A. (less one battery) } 16 guns.
A/69th Howitzer Battery .. .. }
13th Divisional Ammunition Column.

ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS.

Nos. 39, 40 and 41 British Field Ambulances.
No. 28 Sanitary Section.
Mobile Veterinary Section.
13th Divisional Supply Column.

TROOPS ATTACHED TO 13th DIVISION.

33rd Cavalry.
One section, 1/104th Battery, R.G.A.—2 guns.

7th (Meerut) DIVISION.

(Major-General A. S. Cobbe.)

INFANTRY.

19th Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General E. C. Peebles.)
- 2nd Black Watch (about to be transferred to 21st Brigade).
- 1st Seaforth Highlanders.
- 28th Punjabis.
- 92nd Punjabis.
- 125th Rifles.

INFANTRY—cont.

21st Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General C. E. Norie.)	2nd Norfolk Regiment (under orders for Basra). 2nd Dorsetshire Regiment (about to be re-organised and form part of Corps Troops). 9th Bhopal Infantry. 1/8th Gurkhas.
28th Infantry Brigade. (Lieut.-Colonel A. E. Davies.)	2nd Leicestershire Regiment. 51st Sikhs. 53rd Sikhs. 56th Rifles.

ENGINEERS AND PIONEERS.

1st Field Company, Sappers and Miners.
3rd Field Company, Sappers and Miners.
107th Pioneers.

SIGNAL UNIT.

7th Divisional Signal Company.

ARTILLERY.

(C.R.A.—Brig.-General A. D. Musgrave.)

9th Brigade, R.F.A. (19th, 20th and 28th Batteries) D/69th Howitzer Battery, R.F.A. .. .. .. 56th Brigade, R.F.A. (less two batteries *en route*) ..	30 guns, with 8 *en route.*

7th Divisional Ammunition Column.

ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS.

Nos. 19 and 20 British Field Ambulances.
Nos. 128, 129, 130 Indian Field Ambulances.
No. 4 Sanitary Section.
Mobile Veterinary Section.
7th Divisional Supply Column.
7th Divisional Troops Transport Company.
19th, 21st and 28th Brigade Transport Companies.

TROOPS ATTACHED TO 7th DIVISION.

D/55th Battery, R.F.A. (13th Division) .. 72nd Battery, 5-inch Howitzer Brigade, R.G.A. One 6-inch howitzer	9 guns.

Stokes Mortar Brigade (48 3-inch Stokes mortars).

14th (Indian) DIVISION.

(Major-General R. G. Egerton.)

INFANTRY.

35th Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General W. M. Thomson.)	1/4th Hampshire Regiment (about to be re-organised and form part of Corps Troops). 1/5th Buffs (East Kent Regiment). 3rd Brahmans. 37th Dogras. 2/4th Gurkhas.
36th Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General G. Christian.)	1/6th Devonshire Regiment. 26th Punjabis. 62nd Punjabis. 82nd Punjabis.
37th Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General F. J. Fowler.)	1/4th Devonshire Regiment. 36th Sikhs. 45th Sikhs. 1/2nd Gurkhas.

ENGINEERS AND PIONEERS.

12th Field Company, Sappers and Miners.
13th Field Company, Sappers and Miners.
128th Pioneers.

SIGNAL UNIT.

14th Divisional Signal Company.

ARTILLERY.

(C.R.A.—Brig.-General H. J. A. Mackey.)

13th Brigade, R.F.A. (2nd, 8th and 44th Batteries)	22 guns.
C/69th Howitzer Battery	

14th Divisional Ammunition Column.

ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS.

Nos. 1, 20, 21 and 22 Combined Field Ambulances.
No. 18 Sanitary Section.
14th Divisional Supply Column.
14th Divisional Troops Transport Company.
35th, 36th and 37th Brigade Transport Companies.

TROOPS ATTACHED TO 14th DIVISION.

7th Lancers.

B/55th Battery, R.F.A. (13th Division) ..	10 guns.
2/86th Battery (60-pounder Brigade, R.G.A.)	
Two 12-pounder anti-aircraft guns	

6th CAVALRY BRIGADE.

(Brig.-General S. F. Crocker.)

TROOPS.

"S" Battery, R.H.A.—4 guns (completed to 6 guns on 31st July).
14th Hussars.
16th Cavalry (less two squadrons).
Field Troop, 2nd Sappers and Miners.
Signal Troop.
Cavalry Brigade Ammunition Column.

ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS.

No. 18 Cavalry Field Ambulance.
No. 131 Indian Cavalry Field Ambulance.
Cavalry Brigade Supply Column.
Cavalry Brigade Transport Company.

CORPS TROOPS.

ENGINEERS AND PIONEERS.

No. 1 Bridging Train.
No. 2 Bridging Train.
64th Pioneers.

SIGNAL UNITS.

1/3rd Indian Army Corps Signal Company.
2/3rd Indian Army Corps Signal Company.
No. 22 Airline Section, R.E.
"B" Wagon Station, Wireless.
"D" and "G" Pack Stations, Wireless.

CORPS ARTILLERY.

(C.R.A.—Brig.-General W. K. Hardy.)

4·5-inch Howitzer Brigade, R.F.A. (60th and 61st Batteries) ..	22 guns.
77th Battery (5-inch Howitzer Brigade, R.G.A.) (under orders for Nasiriya)	
2/104th Battery (60-pounder Brigade, R.G.A.)	
Two 13-pounder anti-aircraft guns	

Corps Artillery Ammunition Column.
Corps Ammunition Park.

ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS.

Nos. 15 and 16 Casualty Clearing Stations.
No. 19 Combined Clearing Hospital.
No. 61 Indian Stationary Hospital.
River Convoy Unit.
No. 7 Advanced depots of Medical Stores.
No. 135 Indian Field Ambulance.
No. 5 Advanced depot of Medical Stores.
Advanced Remount Section.
Corps Troops Supply Column.
Corps Artillery Supply Section.
Depot Transport.

ROYAL FLYING CORPS.

" A " and " B " Flights, No. 30 Squadron.

APPENDIX XXXII.

Distribution of the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force on the 15th July, 1916 (excluding the Tigris Corps).

TIGRIS LINE OF COMMUNICATIONS.

ALI GHARBI.

Unit	Role
102nd Grenadiers	Post garrison.
One 15-pounder post gun ..	Post garrison.
"H" Wireless Pack Station	Post garrison.
2nd Rajputs	Mobile Column.
One squadron, 16th Cavalry	Mobile Column.
23rd Mountain Battery (less two sections) ..	Mobile Column.
"N" Wireless Pack Station	Mobile Column.
One section, No. 1 Combined Field Ambulance	Mobile Column.
One section, No. 137 Indian Field Ambulance	Mobile Column.

FULAIFILA.

One company, 20th Punjabis.

MUDELIL (Mobile Column).

67th Punjabis.
One squadron, 16th Cavalry.
One section, 23rd Mountain Battery.
One section, No. 1 Combined Field Ambulance.
No. 3 Bridging Train (temporarily).

AMARA.

20th Punjabis (less half battalion).
1/Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry (reforming).
2/7th Gurkhas (reforming).
2/119th Infantry (forming).
D/56th Battery, R.F.A. (*en route* to 7th Division).
C/222nd Battery, R.F.A.
One 15-pounder post gun (Volunteer Artillery Battery).

Group	Unit
Wireless	Headquarters No. 2 Wireless Signal Squadron.
Wireless	"A" Wagon Station.
Wireless	Two spare pack sets.
Medical Units	No. 1 Combined Field Ambulance (for Tigris Corps).
Medical Units	No. 23 British Stationary Hospital.
Medical Units	No. 70 Indian Stationary Hospital.
Medical Units	Nos. 1, 2 and 32 British General Hospitals.
Medical Units	Nos. 12, 21, and 27 Indian General Hospitals.
Medical Units	No. 17 Sanitary Section.
Medical Units	Nos. 3 and 6 Advanced depots of Medical Stores.

Advanced Remount Section.

QALA SALIH AND EZRA'S TOMB.

One company, 20th Punjabis.

QURNA.

44th Merwara Infantry (less half battalion).
No. 57 Indian Stationary Hospital.

EUPHRATES LINE.

15th Division (Major-General H. T. Brooking).

NASIRIYA.

Headquarters, 15th Division.

12th Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General F. P. S. Dunsford.)
- 1/5th Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey).
- 43rd Infantry.
- 90th Punjabis.

42nd Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General F. G. Lucas.)
- 1/4th Dorsetshire Regiment.
- 2/5th Gurkhas.
- 2/6th Gurkhas.

7th Mountain Artillery Brigade (21st and 26th Batteries)
B/222nd Brigade, R.F.A. .. .. } 16 guns.

15th Divisional Ammunition Column.
Detachment, Volunteer Artillery Battery (four 15-pounders and one 5-inch gun)—5 guns.
4th Field Company, Sappers and Miners.
Malerkotla Sappers and Miners.
48th Pioneers (reforming).
15th Divisional Signal Company (less one brigade section).
" C " and " J " Wireless Pack Stations.

Medical Units
- Nos. 3, 23, 24 (less detachment at Basra) and 108 Combined Field Ambulances.
- No. 83 Indian Stationary Hospital.
- No. 16 Sanitary Section (*en route*).

KHAMISIYA.

34th Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General E. C. Tidswell.)
- 2nd Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment.
- 112th Infantry.
- 114th Mahrattas.

30th Mountain Battery .. 6 guns.
One squadron, 12th Cavalry
" I " Wireless Pack Station.
One brigade section, 15th Divisional Signal Company.
No. 19 Combined Field Ambulance.

AKAIKA AND SUQ ASH SHUYUKH.

31st Punjabis (34th Brigade).
Two post guns.

BASRA.

General Headquarters.
Headquarters, Inspector-General of Communications.
Base depots.

41st Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General A. Cadell.)
- Headquarters and Brigade Signal Section (at Shaiba).
- 1/4th Somerset Light Infantry.
- 6th Jats.
- 2/103rd Mahrattas (at Shaiba, forming, under orders for India).
- 2/10th Gurkhas (at Barjisiya).

97th Infantry.
C/56th Battery, R.F.A. (for 7th Division).
Headquarters and " A " Battery, 222nd Brigade, R.F.A.
Two squadrons, 12th Cavalry.
Patiala Lancers (at Barjisiya).
Kite Balloon section, R.N.A.S.
" C " Flight, No. 30 Squadron, R.F.C.
Aircraft Park, R.F.C.

1st Australia and New Zealand Wireless Signal Squadron (less four stations).
General Headquarters Signal Company.
Signal Service Park and Depot.
18th Field Company, Sappers and Miners.
Tehri-Garhwal Sappers and Miners.
13th Divisional Cyclist Company (for 13th Division).

Medical Units:
- No. 105 Indian Field Ambulance (for Nasiriya).
- One section, No. 137 Indian Field Ambulance.
- No. 20 Casualty Clearing Station (in river boats).
- Nos. 3 and 33 British General Hospitals.
- S.S. *Karadeniz* (British General Hospital).
- Nos. 8, 9, 10, 20 and 22 Indian General Hospitals.
- No. 10 Sanitary Section.
- No. 8 Depot of Medical Stores (for Nasiriya).
- Base Depot.
- No. 23 Motor Ambulance Convoy.

Nos. 6 and 18 Field Veterinary Sections.

ARABISTAN.

AHWAZ.

23rd Cavalry (less one squadron).
Half battalion, 44th Merwara Infantry.
Two sections, No. 4 Indian Field Ambulance.

SHUSH.

One squadron, 23rd Cavalry.

BUSHIRE.

14th Sikhs.
2/22nd Punjabis.
Half battalion, 124th Infantry.
One squadron, 15th Lancers.
Three Naval 12-pounder guns, One 7-pounder mountain gun, Two 15-pounder post guns .. } 6 guns.
No. 51 Indian Stationary Hospital.

APPENDIX XXXIII.

MESOPOTAMIA FORCE.

Distribution of troops on 27th August, 1916.

TIGRIS CORPS (IIIrd Indian Army Corps) (Area Sinn—Shaikh Saad).

3rd (Lahore) Division.

7th Infantry Brigade:
- 1st Connaught Rangers.
- 27th Punjabis.
- 91st Punjabis (*en route*)—Arrived Basra 30th August from India.
- 96th Infantry.
- Machine gun company.

8th Infantry Brigade:
- 1st Manchester Regiment.
- 4th Rajputs.
- 47th Sikhs.
- 59th Rifles.
- Machine gun company.

9th Infantry Brigade:
- 1st Highland Light Infantry.
- 93rd Infantry.
- 105th Mahrattas.
- 1/1st Gurkhas.
- 1/9th Gurkhas (under orders for India).
- Machine gun company.

4th Brigade, R.F.A. (7th, 14th and 66th Batteries) }
B/69th Howitzer Battery, R.F.A. .. .. } 22 guns.
3rd Divisional Ammunition Column.
20th Field Company, Sappers and Miners.
21st Field Company, Sappers and Miners.
34th Sikh Pioneers.
7th Lancers (less two squadrons)—(under orders for India).
No. 3 Divisional Signal Company.
Field Ambulances:
- Nos. 7 and 8 British.
- Nos. 111, 112, 113 Indian.

No. 11 Sanitary Section.
Mobile Veterinary Section.

7th (Meerut) Division.

19th Infantry Brigade:
- 1st Seaforth Highlanders.
- 28th Punjabis.
- 92nd Punjabis.
- 125th Rifles.
- Machine gun company.

21st Infantry Brigade:
- 2nd Black Watch.
- 9th Bhopal Infantry.
- 20th Punjabis (detached on L. of C.).
- 1/8th Gurkhas.
- Machine gun company.

28th Infantry Brigade:
- 2nd Leicestershire Regiment.
- 51st Sikhs.
- 53rd Sikhs.
- 56th Rifles.
- Machine gun company.

9th Brigade, R.F.A. (19th, 20th and 28th Batteries) .. .. }
56th Brigade, R.F.A. ("A," "B," "C" and "D" Batteries) } 38 guns.
D/69th Howitzer Battery, R.F.A. .. .. }
7th Divisional Ammunition Column.

7th (*Meerut*) *Division*—cont.

1st Field Company, Sappers and Miners.
3rd Field Company, Sappers and Miners.
107th Pioneers.
16th Cavalry (less two squadrons)—(*en route* to Amara, for India).
No. 7 Divisional Signal Company.
Field Ambulances { Nos. 19 and 20 British. / Nos. 128, 129 and 130 Indian.
No. 12 Sanitary Section.
Mobile Veterinary Section.

13th Division (for Amara).

38th Infantry Brigade:
- 6th King's Own Royal Regiment (Lancaster).
- 6th East Lancashire Regiment.
- 6th Prince of Wales's Volunteers (South Lancashire).
- 6th Loyal Regiment (North Lancashire).
- Machine gun company.

39th Infantry Brigade:
- 9th Royal Warwickshire Regiment.
- 7th Gloucestershire Regiment.
- 9th Worcestershire Regiment.
- 7th North Staffordshire Regiment.
- Machine gun company.

40th Infantry Brigade:
- 8th Cheshire Regiment.
- 8th Royal Welch Fusiliers.
- 4th South Wales Borderers.
- 5th Wiltshire Regiment.
- Machine gun company.

55th Brigade, R.F.A. ("A," "B," "C" and "D" Batteries) }
66th Brigade, R.F.A. ("A," "B," "C" and "D" Batteries) } 36 guns.
A/69th Howitzer Battery .. .. }
13th Divisional Ammunition Column.
71st, 72nd and 88th Field Companies, R.E.
8th Welch Regiment (Pioneers).
"D" Squadron, 1/1st Hertfordshire Yeomanry.
13th Divisional Cyclist Company.
No. 13 Divisional Signal Company.
Nos. 39, 40 and 41 British Field Ambulances.
No. 28 Sanitary Section.
Mobile Veterinary Section.

14th (*Indian*) *Division.*

35th Infantry Brigade:
- 1/5th Buffs (East Kent Regiment).
- 3rd Brahmans.
- 37th Dogras.
- 2/4th Gurkhas.
- Machine gun company.

36th Infantry Brigade:
- 1/6th Devonshire Regiment.
- 26th Punjabis.
- 62nd Punjabis.
- 82nd Punjabis.
- Machine gun company.

37th Infantry Brigade:
- 1/4th Devonshire Regiment.
- 36th Sikhs.
- 45th Sikhs.
- 1/2nd Gurkhas.
- Machine gun company.

13th Brigade, R.F.A. (2nd, 8th and 44th Batteries) }
C/69th Howitzer Battery .. .. } 22 guns.
14th Divisional Ammunition Column.

14th (Indian) Division—cont.

12th and 13th Field Companies, Sappers and Miners.
128th Pioneers.
Two squadrons, 7th Lancers (under orders for India).
No. 14 Divisional Signal Company.
Nos. 1, 20, 21, 22 and 135 Combined Field Ambulances.
No. 13 Sanitary Section.

6th Cavalry Brigade.

" S " Battery, R.H.A.—6 guns.
14th Hussars.
4th Cavalry.
33rd Cavalry (*en route* to Amara, for India).
Signal Troop.
Field Troop, Sappers and Miners.
Cavalry Brigade Ammunition Column.
No. 18 Combined Cavalry Field Ambulance.
No. 131 Indian Cavalry Field Ambulance.

Corps Troops.

60-pounder Brigade, R.G.A. (2/86th and 2/104th Batteries) ..	25 guns.
4·5-inch Howitzer Brigade, R.F.A. (60th and 61st Batteries) ..	
72nd Battery, R.G.A. (for Amara)	
One 6-inch howitzer	

Anti-aircraft Section, R.F.A. (two 13-pounders).
Anti-aircraft Detachment (two 12-pounders).
Corps Artillery Ammunition Column (for Amara).
Ammunition Park.
Trench Mortar Brigade (48 3-inch Stokes guns).
Nos. 1 and 2 Bridging Trains.
1/4th Hampshire Regiment.
2nd Dorsetshire Regiment.
64th Pioneers.
No. 30 Squadron, Royal Flying Corps.
Wireless { " B " Wagon Station. / " D " and " G " Pack Stations.
1/3rd Indian Army Corps Signal Company.
2/3rd Indian Army Corps Signal Company (less two cable sections).
Medical Units { Nos. 15, 19 and 20 Combined Casualty Clearing Stations. / No. 16 British Casualty Clearing Station. / No. 61 Indian Stationary Hospital. / Nos. 5 and 7 Advanced Depots of Medical Stores.
Nos. 7 and 10 Field Veterinary Sections.
Advanced Remount Section.

TIGRIS LINE OF COMMUNICATIONS.

ALI GHARBI.

102nd Grenadiers (less one company) ..	Garrison.
Two 15-pounder post guns	
" H " Wireless Pack Station	
2nd Rajputs	Mobile Column.
One squadron, 16th Cavalry	
23rd Mountain Battery (less two sections)	
" N " Wireless Pack Station	
Section, No. 137 Indian Field Ambulance	

FULAIFILA.

One company, 102nd Grenadiers.
One 15-pounder post gun.

MUDELIL (Mobile Column).

67th Punjabis.
One squadron, 16th Cavalry.
One section, 23rd Mountain Battery (*en route* to Ahwaz).
"M" Wireless Pack Station.
One section, No. 1 Combined Field Ambulance.
One section, No. 135 Indian Field Ambulance.
No. 3 Bridging Train (temporarily).
One 15-pounder post gun.

AMARA.

20th Punjabis (under orders for 21st Brigade).
1st Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry.
2/7th Gurkhas.
2/119th Infantry.
C/222nd Battery, R.F.A. (one section for Mudelil).
Detachment, Volunteer Artillery (two 15-pounder post guns).

Wireless:
- Headquarters No. 2 Wireless Signal Squadron.
- "A" Wagon Station.
- Two spare pack sets.

Medical Units:
- One section, No. 122 Indian Field Ambulance (for Mobile Column).
- No. 23 British Stationary Hospital.
- No. 70 Indian Stationary Hospital.
- Nos. 1, 2 and 32 British General Hospitals.
- Nos. 12, 21 and 27 Indian General Hospitals.
- Amara "Isolation" Hospital.
- No. 17 Sanitary Section.
- Nos. 3 and 6 Advanced Depots of Medical Stores.

Advanced Remount Section.

QALA SALIH, EZRA'S TOMB AND POSTS.

8th Rajputs.

QURNA.

44th Merwara Infantry (less half battalion).
No. 57 Indian Stationary Hospital.

EUPHRATES LINE.

(*15th Division*).

NASIRIYA.

Headquarters, 15th Division.

12th Infantry Brigade:
- 1/5th Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey).
- 43rd Infantry.
- 90th Punjabis.
- Machine gun company.

42nd Infantry Brigade:
- 1/4th Dorsetshire Regiment.
- 2/5th Gurkhas.
- 2/6th Gurkhas.
- Machine gun company.

7th Mountain Artillery Brigade (21st and 26th Batteries) } 16 mobile
B/222nd Battery, R.F.A. .. .. } guns.
15th Divisional Ammunition Column.
15th Divisional Signal Company (less one brigade section).
4th Field Company, Sappers and Miners.
Malerkotla Sappers and Miners.
48th Pioneers.

NASIRIYA—*cont.*

Detachment, Volunteer Artillery (four 15-pounder post guns and one 5-inch gun).
Two 15-pounder post guns (for Khamisiya).
12th Cavalry (less 2¾ squadrons).
"C" and "J" Wireless Pack Stations.
Medical Units:
- Nos. 3, 23, 105 and 108 Combined Field Ambulances.
- No. 83 Indian Stationary Hospital.
- No. 27 Combined Casualty Clearing Station (*en route*).
- No. 16 Sanitary Section.
- No. 8 Advanced Depot of Medical Stores.

Mobile Veterinary Section.

KHAMISIYA.

34th Infantry Brigade:
- 2nd Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment.
- 112th Infantry.
- 114th Mahrattas.
- Machine gun company.

30th Mountain Battery—6 guns.
One squadron, 12th Cavalry.
One brigade section, 15th Divisional Signal Company.
"I" Wireless Pack Station.
No. 19 Combined Field Ambulance.

JUNCTION CAMP.*

Detachment, 31st Punjabis.
One 15-pounder post gun (*en route*).

AKAIKA AND SUQ ASH SHUYUKH.

31st Punjabis (34th Brigade).
Two 15-pounder post guns.

BASRA.

General Headquarters.
Headquarters, Inspector-General of Communications.
Base Depots.
7th Cavalry Brigade:
- "V" Battery, R.H.A.—6 guns.
- 13th Hussars.
- 13th Lancers.
- 14th Lancers.
- Machine gun squadron.
- Signal Troop.
- Ammunition Column.

41st Infantry Brigade (at Shaiba):
- Brigade Headquarters.
- 1/4th Somerset Light Infantry.
- 6th Jats.
- No. 24 Combined Field Ambulance.

2nd Norfolk Regiment (at Kurmat Ali).
97th Infantry (*en route* to Ahwaz.)
77th Battery, R.G.A. (for 15th Division).
Headquarters and "A" Battery, 222nd Brigade, R.F.A.
157th Battery, R.G.A.
1¾ squadrons, 12th Cavalry (under orders for Nasiriya).
Patiala Lancers (three squadrons, Barjisiya; one squadron, Shaiba).
No. 14 Kite Balloon Section, R.N.A.S. (for Tigris Corps).
Aircraft Park, R.F.C.
1st Australia and New Zealand Wireless Signal Squadron (less four stations).
General Headquarters Signal Company.

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* Junction of Euphrates and Akaika channel.

Two cable sections, 2/3rd Indian Army Corps Signal Company (for Tigris Corps).
Signal Service Park and Depot.
18th Field Company, Sappers and Miners.
Tehri-Gahrwal Sappers and Miners.

Medical Units:
- "A" Section, No. 137 Indian Field Ambulance (for Shaikh Saad).
- Nos. 3 and 33 British General Hospitals.
- Nos. 8, 9, 10, 20 and 22 Indian General Hospitals.
- No. 31 British Stationary Hospital (for Shaikh Saad).
- Basra Isolation Hospital.
- Benares Ambulance Transport Corps (for Corps).
- No. 10 Sanitary Section.
- Base General Medical Store Depot.
- No. 23 Motor Ambulance Convoy.*

Nos. 6 and 18 Field Veterinary Sections.

ARABISTAN.

AHWAZ.

23rd Cavalry (less one squadron).
Half battalion, 44th Infantry (for Basra).
Two 15-pounder post guns.
Two sections, No. 4 Combined Field Ambulance.

SHUSH.

One squadron, 23rd Cavalry.

BUSHIRE.

14th Sikhs.
2/22nd Punjabis.
Half battalion, 124th Baluchistan Infantry.
One squadron, 15th Lancers.
Three Naval 12-pounders .. }
One 7-pounder mountain gun } 6 guns.
Two 15-pounder post guns .. }
No. 51 Indian Stationary Hospital.

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* Of fifty motor ambulances. Arrived Basra 7th June.

APPENDIX XXXIV.

Distribution of the Troops of the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force on the 19th November, 1916.

TIGRIS FRONT.

General Headquarters (Lieut.-General F. S. Maude).

6th Cavalry Brigade (Brig.-General S. F. Crocker).
- "S" Battery, R.H.A., and ammunition column.
- 14th Hussars.
- 21st Cavalry (less two squadrons *en route*).
- 22nd Cavalry (less two squadrons *en route*).
- 6th Machine Gun Squadron.
- 2nd Field Troop, Sappers and Miners.
- Signal Troop.
- No. 131 Combined Cavalry Field Ambulance.

7th Cavalry Brigade (temporarily camped near Amara) (Brig.-General L. C. Jones).
- "V" Battery, R.H.A., and ammunition column.
- 13th Hussars.
- 13th Lancers.
- 14th Lancers.
- 7th Machine Gun Squadron.
- Field Troop, R.E.
- Signal Troop.
- No. 119 Combined Cavalry Field Ambulance.
- No. 4 Mobile Veterinary Section.

Ist Indian Army Corps (Lieut.-General A. S. Cobbe).

3rd Division (Major-General H. d'U. Keary).

7th Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General S. R. Davidson.)
- 1st Connaught Rangers.
- 27th Punjabis.
- 91st Punjabis.
- 2/7th Gurkhas.
- No. 131 Machine Gun Company.

8th Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General S. M. Edwardes.)
- 1st Manchester Regiment.
- 47th Sikhs.
- 59th Rifles.
- 2/124th Baluchistan Infantry.
- No. 132 Machine Gun Company.

9th Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General L. W. Y. Campbell.)
- 1st Highland Light Infantry.
- 1/1st Gurkhas.
- 93rd Infantry.
- 105th Mahrattas.
- No. 133 Machine Gun Company.

Artillery
- Headquarters Divisional Artillery.
- 4th Brigade, R.F.A. (7th, 14th and 66th Batteries), (less ammunition column).
- 215th Brigade, R.F.A. (less one battery), (temporarily at Amara).
- B/69th Battery, R.F.A.

Engineers and Pioneers
- Headquarters D visional Engineers.
- 18th, 20th and 21st Field Companies, Sappers and Miners.
- 34th Sikh Pioneers.

No. 3 Divisional Signal Company.

3rd Division—cont.

Medical Units { Nos. 7 and 9 British Field Ambulances.
Nos. 111, 112 and 113 Indian Field Ambulances.
No. 11 Sanitary Section. }

No. 3 Mobile Veterinary Section.

7th Division (Major-General V. B. Fane).

19th Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General C. E. Norie.) { 1st Seaforth Highlanders.
28th Punjabis.
92nd Punjabis.
125th Rifles.
No. 134 Machine Gun Company. }

21st Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General E. C. Peebles.) { 2nd Black Watch.
9th Bhopal Infantry.
20th Punjabis.
1/8th Gurkhas.
No. 135 Machine Gun Company. }

28th Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General C. H. Davies.) { 2nd Leicestershire Regiment.
51st Sikhs.
53rd Sikhs.
56th Rifles.
No. 136 Machine Gun Company. }

Artillery .. { Headquarters Divisional Artillery.
9th Brigade, R.F.A. (19th, 20th and 28th Batteries), (less ammunition column).
56th Brigade, R.F.A. ("A," "B," "C" and "D" Batteries).
D/69th Battery, R.F.A. }

Engineers and Pioneers { Headquarters Divisional Engineers.
1st and 3rd Field Companies, Sappers and Miners.
4th Field Company, Sappers and Miners (temporarily at Nasiriya).
121st Pioneers. }

7th Divisional Signal Company.

Medical Units { Nos. 19 and 20 British Field Ambulances.
Nos. 128, 129 and 130 Indian Field Ambulances.
No. 12 Sanitary Section. }

No. 2 Mobile Veterinary Section.

Corps Troops.

32nd Lancers (less two squadrons), (*en route*).
1st Corps Signal Company.
No. 1 Printing Section.
No. 1 Litho Section.

IIIRD INDIAN ARMY CORPS (Major-General W. R. Marshall).

13th Division (temporarily camped near Amara), (Major-General W. de S. Cayley).

38th Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General J. W. O'Dowda.) { 6th King's Own Royal Regiment (Lancaster).
6th East Lancashire Regiment.
6th Prince of Wales's Volunteers (South Lancashire).
6th Loyal Regiment (North Lancashire).
No. 38 Machine Gun Company. }

39th Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General T. A. Andrus.) { 9th Royal Warwickshire Regiment.
7th Gloucestershire Regiment.
9th Worcestershire Regiment.
7th North Staffordshire Regiment.
No. 39 Machine Gun Company. }

13th Division—cont.

40th Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General A. C. Lewin.)
- 8th Cheshire Regiment.
- 8th Royal Welch Fusiliers.
- 4th South Wales Borderers.
- 5th Wiltshire Regiment.
- No. 40 Machine Gun Company.

Mounted Troops
- Squadron 1/1 Hertfordshire Yeomanry
- 13th Divisional Cyclist Company.

Artillery ..
- 55th Brigade, R.F.A. ("A," "B," "C" and "D" Batteries).
- 66th Brigade, R.F.A. ("A," "B," "C" and "D" Batteries).
- A/69th Battery, R.F.A.
- 72nd Battery, R.G.A.
- 13th Divisional Ammunition Column.

Engineers and Pioneers
- 71st Field Company, R.E.*
- 72nd Field Company, R.E.*
- 88th Field Company. R.E.
- 8th Welch Regiment (Pioneers).*

13th Divisional Signal Company.
13th Divisional Supply Column.
10th Field Bakery.
31st Field Butchery.

Medical Units
- 39th, 40th and 41st Field Ambulances.
- No. 28 Sanitary Section.

No. 24 Mobile Veterinary Section.

14th Division (Major-General R. G. Egerton).

35th Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General W. M. Thomson.)
- 1/5th Buffs (East Kent Regiment).
- 37th Dogras.
- 3rd Brahmans.
- 2/4th Gurkhas.
- No. 185 Machine Gun Company.

36th Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General L. B. Walton.)
- 1/4th Hampshire Regiment.
- 26th Punjabis.
- 62nd Punjabis.
- 82nd Punjabis.
- No. 186 Machine Gun Company.

37th Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General F. J. Fowler.)
- 1/4th Devonshire Regiment.
- 36th Sikhs.
- 45th Sikhs.
- 1/2nd Gurkhas.
- No. 187 Machine Gun Company.

Artillery
- Headquarters Divisional Artillery.
- 13th Brigade, R.F.A. (2nd, 8th and 44th Batteries).
- C/69th Battery, R.F.A.

Engineers and Pioneers
- Headquarters Divisional Engineers.
- 12th and 13th Field Companies, Sappers and Miners.
- 15th Field Company, Sappers and Miners (*en route*).
- 128th Pioneers.

14th Divisional Signal Company.

Medical Units
- Nos. 1, 20, 21, 22 and 135 Combined Field Ambulances.
- No. 13 Sanitary Section.

No. 1 Mobile Veterinary Section.

Corps Troops.

Two squadrons, 32nd Lancers.
IIIrd Corps Signal Company.
No. 2 Printing Section.
No. 2 Litho Section.

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* Employed temporarily on the construction of the Qurna—Amara railway.

Army Troops.*

No. 14 Kite Balloon Section, R.N.A.S.
No. 134 (Howitzer) Brigade, R.F.A. (60th and 61st Batteries).
No. 74 Heavy Artillery Group [2/86th, 2/104th and 157th Batteries (157th at Basra)].
159th Siege Battery, R.G.A. (at Basra, less one gun with Ist Corps).
No. 59 Anti-aircraft Section (two 13-pounders)—attached to IIIrd Corps.
No. 80 Anti-aircraft Section (two 13-pounders)—at Basra.
No. 208 Anti-aircraft Section (two 12-pounders).
Personnel only of Nos. 133, 134, 135, 136, 137 and 138 Trench Mortar Batteries (24 2-inch mortars)—at Basra.
" A " Stokes Mortar Battery—attached to Ist Corps.
" B," " C," " D," " E " and " F " Stokes Mortar Batteries—attached to IIIrd Corps.
No. 1 Bridging Train—at Shaikh Saad (for Arab Village).
No. 2 Bridging Train—at Arab Village.
Army Signal Company.
1st (Anzac) Wireless Signal Squadron (*en route*).
64th Pioneers—attached IIIrd Corps.
Nos. 788 and 789 M.T. Companies, A.S.C.—at Shaikh Saad (Caterpillar tractors).
No. 30 Squadron, R.F.C. (less two machines with 15th Division at Nasiriya).

EUPHRATES FRONT.

(Major-General H. T. Brooking.)

NASIRIYA.

Headquarters, 15th Division.

12th Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General F. P. S. Dunsford.)
- 1/5th Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey).
- 43rd Erinpura Regiment.
- 90th Punjabis.
- No. 128 Machine Gun Company.

42nd Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General F. G. Lucas.)
- 1/4th Dorsetshire Regiment.
- 2/5th Gurkhas.
- 2/6th Gurkhas.
- No. 130 Machine Gun Company.

12th Cavalry (less one squadron).

Artillery
- Headquarters Divisional Artillery.
- 222nd Brigade, R.F.A. (less " C " Battery).
- 7th Mountain Artillery Brigade (21st and 26th Batteries).
- 15th Divisional Ammunition Column.

Engineers and Pioneers
- Headquarters Divisional Engineers.
- 3/1st (Northumbrian) Company, R.E. (*en route*).
- 1/3rd (Northumbrian) Company, R.E. (*en route*).
- 4th Field Company, Sappers and Miners (for 7th Division).
- Malerkotla Sappers and Miners.
- 48th Pioneers.

15th Divisional Signal Company (less one brigade section).
No. 10 Printing Section.
No. 8 Litho Section.

Medical Units
- Nos. 3, 23, 105 and 108 Combined Field Ambulances.
- No. 16 Sanitary Section.

* These were increased within a week's time by the arrival at Basra of the 524th Howitzer Battery, R.F.A. (four 4·5-inch howitzers) and No. 92 Anti-aircraft Section.

NASIRIYA—*cont.*

Attached.

Volunteer Battery, less detachments (four 15-pounders and one 5-inch gun).
" B " Troop (less pack station) of 2nd Wireless Signal Squadron.
Detachment No. 30 Squadron, R.F.C. (two machines).
No. 27 Casualty Clearing Station (*en route*).
No. 83 Combined Stationary Hospital.
No. 8 Advancd Depot Medical Stores.
No. 16 Field Veterinary Section.

KHAMISIYA.

34th Infantry Brigade. (Brig.-General E. C. Tidswell.) — 2nd Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment. 31st Punjabis. 112th Infantry. No. 129 Machine Gun Company.
One squadron, 12th Cavalry.
Detachment, Volunteer Battery (two 15-pounders).
One brigade section, 15th Divisional Signal Company.
One pack station, " B " Troop, 2nd Wireless Signal Squadron.
No. 19 Combined Field Ambulance.

AKAIKA.

114th Mahrattas (less half battalion) (34th Brigade).
Two 15-pounder guns, Volunteer Battery.

JUNCTION CAMP AND SUQ ASH SHUYUKH.

Half battalion, 114th Mahrattas.
One 15-pounder gun, Volunteer Battery (Junction Camp).

KARUN FRONT.

(Colonel L. N. Younghusband.)

AHWAZ.

Headquarters.
23rd Cavalry (less three squadrons).
Detachment Anglo-Indian Battery (two 15-pounder guns).
" C " Troop (less two pack stations) 2nd Wireless Signal Squadron.
8th Rajputs (*en route*).
Half battalion, 97th Infantry.
No. 4 Indian Field Ambulance (two sections).

DIZFUL–SHUSHTAR COLUMN.

Two squadrons, 23rd Cavalry.
97th Infantry (less half battalion).

SHUSH.

One squadron, 23rd Cavalry.

BUSHIRE FRONT.

(Brig.-General J. A. Douglas.)

BUSHIRE.

Headquarters.
One squadron, 15th Lancers.
Artillery — Four naval 12-pounders (personnel from H.M. Ships when required). One 7-pounder mountain gun, Two 15-pounder guns .. — post guns, with detachment Indian Mountain Artillery.
14th Sikhs.
22nd Punjabis.
No. 51 Indian Stationary Hospital.

EUPHRATES DEFENCES.

(Brig.-General F. R. E. Lock.)

BASRA.

- Headquarters, Euphrates Defences.
- Signal Section.
- Headquarters, No. 1 Section Defences.
- 6th Jats.
- 2/9th Gurkhas (less two companies).

RATAWI.

- Headquarters, No. 2 Section Defences.
- Two troops, Patiala Lancers.
- Two companies, 2/9th Gurkhas.
- One section, 24th Combined Field Ambulance.

LUQAIT.

- Headquarters, No. 3 Section Defences.
- 1½ squadrons, Patiala Lancers.
- 1/10th Gurkhas.

SHAIBA.

- Headquarters, Defences Reserves.
- Patiala Lancers (less two squadrons).
- 1/4th Somerset Light Infantry.
- Supply and Transport Company.
- 24th Combined Field Ambulance (less one section).

TIGRIS DEFENCES.

(Brig.-General H. H. Austin.)

No. 1 Section

QURNA.

- Headquarters, No. 1 Section Tigris Defences.
- 44th Infantry (less half battalion).

EZRA'S TOMB AND POSTS.

- Half battalion, 44th Infantry.

QALA SALIH.

- 96th Infantry (less half battalion).

No. 2 Section

AMARA.

- Headquarters, Tigris Defences.
- Headquarters, No. 2 Section Tigris Defences.
- Mobile Column:
  - One squadron, 10th Lancers (less two troops)
  - One pack station, "A" Troop, 2nd Wireless Signal Squadron .. ..
  - 1st Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry .. ..
  - One section, No. 22 Indian Field Ambulance .. ..
- Anglo-Indian Battery (less detachments)—two post guns.
- 1/6th Devonshire Regiment.
- 4th Rajputs.
- Half battalion, 96th Infantry.

MUDELIL.

- Mobile Column:
  - One squadron, 16th Cavalry (for India)
  - One pack station, 1st Wireless Signal Squadron .. ..
  - 67th Punjabis .. .. ..
  - One section, No. 135 Indian Field Ambulance .. ..
- One post gun, Anglo-Indian Battery.

FULAIFILA.

- One 15-pounder post gun.
- 1½ companies, 2/119th Infantry.

No. 3 Section:

ALI GHARBI.

Mobile Column:
- One squadron, 16th Cavalry (for India)
- One section, C/222nd Battery, R.F.A. ..
- One pack station, "A" Troop, 2nd Wireless Signal Squadron .. ..
- 2nd Rajputs .. ..
- One section, No. 137 Indian Field Ambulance .. ..

One post gun, Anglo-Indian Battery.
102nd Grenadiers (less one company).

OMAIYA (to be abolished).
Two troops, 10th Lancers.
One post gun, Anglo-Indian Battery.
One company, 102nd Grenadiers.

SHAIKH SAAD.
Headquarters, No. 3 Section Tigris Defences.
One squadron, 10th Lancers.
C/222nd Battery, R.F.A. (less one section).
2nd Norfolk Regiment.
2nd Dorsetshire Regiment.
2/119th Infantry (less 1½ companies).

LINE OF COMMUNICATION UNITS.

BASRA.
Headquarters, Inspector-General Communications.
Base Headquarters.
Headquarters, 2nd Wireless Signal Squadron.
"D" Troop (less one pack station), 2nd Wireless Signal Squadron.
Signal Service Park and Depot.
Labour Corps (Royal Engineers): 1st (less one company); 3rd, 5th (three companies); one company each of 6th and 7th; 8th (two companies); 10th (two companies); 11th.
Labour Corps (other than R.E.): 6th and 7th Porter Corps. 12th, 13th and 24th Labour Corps.
73rd Carnatic Infantry.
79th Carnatic Infantry.
Nos. 1, 2 and 3 British Base Depots.
Nos. 1, 2 and 3 Indian Base Depots.
Indian General Base Depot.
No. 596 M.T. Company, A.S.C.
No. 695 M.T. Company, A.S.C. (Base M.T. Company and repair depot).
1st Bullock Corps (forming).

Medical:
- Nos. 3, 33, 40 and 133 British General Hospitals.
- Nos. 8, 9, 10, 20, 22 and 24 Indian General Hospitals.
- No. 25 Indian General Hospital (forming).
- Basra Isolation Hospital.
- Officers' Hospital, Bait Naama.
- Nos. 10, 46 and 99 Sanitary Sections.
- No. 1 General Medical Store Depot.
- No. 10 British Base Depot Medical Stores.
- No. 23 Motor Ambulance Convoy.

Nos. 6 and 18 Field Veterinary Sections.
Base Veterinary Store Depot.

MOHAMMERAH.
British Convalescent Depot.
Indian Convalescent Depot (forming).
No. 27 Indian General Hospital (forming).

QURNA.
4th Labour Corps.
No. 57 Indian Stationary Hospital.

AMARA.

"A" Troop, 2nd Wireless Signal Squadron (less two stations).
122nd Infantry.
Medical:
- No. 23 British Stationary Hospital.
- No. 70 Indian Stationary Hospital.
- Nos. 1, 2 and 32 British General Hospitals.
- Nos. 19, 21, 23 and 42 Indian General Hospitals.
- Isolation Hospital.
- Officers' Convalescent Depot.
- British Convalescent Depot.
- Indian Convalescent Depot.
- Nos. 17 and 100 Sanitary Sections.
- No. 3 Advanced Depot, Medical Stores.

Advanced Remount Section.
Nos. 9 and 10 Field Veterinary Sections.

SHAIKH SAAD.

Headquarters, Advanced Base.
Headquarters, Riverhead.
Advanced Signal Park.
2nd Labour Corps.
Medical:
- No. 15 Combined Casualty Clearing Station.
- No. 16 British Casualty Clearing Station.
- No. 19 Combined Casualty Clearing Station.
- No. 20 Combined Casualty Clearing Station.
- No. 31 British Stationary Hospital.
- Combined Convalescent Depot.
- No. 61 Indian Stationary Hospital.
- Nos. 6 and 7 Advanced Depots Medical Stores.
- Nos. 14 and 101 Sanitary Sections.

No. 7 Field Veterinary Section.
Advanced Veterinary Store Depot.

ARAB VILLAGE.

Ammunition Park.
No. 5 Advanced Depot Medical Stores.
Advanced Remount Section.

OTHER UNITS ON LINE OF COMMUNICATION.

BASRA.

157th Battery, R.G.A. (Army Troops).
159th Siege Battery, R.G.A. (less one 6-inch howitzer) (Army Troops).
No. 80 Anti-Aircraft Section, R.F.A. (Army Troops).
77th Battery, R.G.A. (15th Division).
23rd Mountain Battery, 30th Mountain Battery — About to leave Mesopotamia for India.
Nos. 133, 134, 135, 136, 137 and 138 Trench Mortar Batteries (personnel only) (Army Troops).
2/2nd (Northumbrian) Company, R.E. (attached L. of C.).
Tehri-Garhwal Sappers and Miners (attached L. of C.).
Aircraft Park, R.F.C.
Nos. 783 and 784 M.T. Companies, A.S.C. (Ford van supply companies).

QURNA.

" A " Section, No. 137 Indian Field Ambulance.

SHAIKH SAAD.

Military Railway Company.
No. 33 Motor Ambulance Convoy.
No. 3 Bridging Train

APPENDIX XXXV.

List of principal officers with the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force on the 1st January, 1917.

Army Commander—Lieut.-General F. S. Maude.

Chief of the General Staff	Major-General A. W. Money.
Sub-Chief of the General Staff ..	Brig.-General H. R. Hopwood.
Major-General, Royal Artillery ..	Major-General L. A. C. Gordon.
Major-General, Royal Engineers ..	Major-General J. C. Rimington.
Deputy-Adjutant-General	Brig.-General F. F. Ready.
Deputy-Quartermaster-General ..	Brig.-General H. O. Knox.
Director of Ordnance Services ..	Brig.-General H. W. Perry
Director of Remounts..	Brig.-General G. L. Holdsworth.
Director of Supply and Transport ..	Brig.-General P. C. J. Scott.
Inspector-General of Communications	Major-General G. F. MacMunn.
Deputy-Inspector-General of Communications	Brig.-General O. B. S. F. Shore.
Director of Inland Water Transport	Brig.-General W. H. Grey.

G.O.C. Ist Army Corps—Lieut.-General A. S. Cobbe.

Brigadier-General, General Staff, Ist Corps	Brig.-General H. J. P. Browne.
Deputy Adjutant and Quartermaster General, Ist Corps	Brig.-General C. Rattray.
Brigadier-General, Royal Artillery, Ist Corps	Brig.-General G. F. White.

G.O.C. IIIrd Army Corps—Lieut.-General W. R. Marshall.

Brigadier-General, General Staff, IIIrd Corps	Brig.-General T. Fraser.
Deputy Adjutant and Quartermaster General, IIIrd Corps	Brig.-General M. E. Willoughby.
Brigadier-General, Royal Artillery, IIIrd Corps	Brig.-General W. K. Hardy.

G.O.C. Cavalry Division—Brig.-General S. F. Crocker.

G.O.C. 6th Cavalry Brigade	Brig.-General S. F. Crocker.
G.O.C. 7th Cavalry Brigade ..	Brig.-General L. C. Jones.

G.O.C. 3rd Division—Major-General H. d'U. Keary.

G.O.C. 7th Infantry Brigade ..	Brig.-General S. R. Davidson.
G.O.C. 8th Infantry Brigade ..	Brig.-General S. M. Edwardes.
G.O.C. 9th Infantry Brigade ..	Brig.-General L. W. Y. Campbell.

G.O.C. 7th Division—Major-General V. B. Fane.

G.O.C. 19th Infantry Brigade ..	Brig.-General C. E. de M. Norie.
G.O.C. 21st Infantry Brigade ..	Brig.-General E. C. Peebles.
G.O.C. 28th Infantry Brigade ..	Brig.-General C. H. Davies.

G.O.C. 13th Division—Major-General W. de S. Cayley.

G.O.C. 38th Infantry Brigade ..	Brig.-General J. W. O'Dowda.
G.O.C. 39th Infantry Brigade ..	Brig.-General T. A. Andrus.
G.O.C. 40th Infantry Brigade ..	Brig.-General A. C. Lewin.

G.O.C. 14th Division—Major-General R. G. Egerton.

G.O.C. 35th Infantry Brigade ..	Brig.-General W. M. Thomson.
G.O.C. 36th Infantry Brigade ..	Brig.-General L. B. Walton.
G.O.C. 37th Infantry Brigade ..	Brig.-General O. W. Carey.

G.O.C. 15th Division—Major-General H. T. Brooking.

G.O.C. 12th Infantry Brigade ..	Brig.-General F. P. S. Dunsford.
G.O.C. 34th Infantry Brigade ..	Brig.-General E. C. Tidswell.
G.O.C. 42nd Infantry Brigade ..	Brig.-General F. G. Lucas.
G.O.C. Tigris Defences	Brig.-General H. H. Austin.
G.O.C. Euphrates Defences (and 41st Infantry Brigade)	Brig.-General F. R. E. Lock.
G.O.C. Bushire	Brig.-General J. A. Douglas.
G.O.C. Karun Front	Brig.-General L. N. Younghusband.

APPENDIX XXXVI.

Distribution of the troops of the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force on the 21st January, 1917.

TIGRIS FRONT.

General Headquarters.

Cavalry Division.

6th Cavalry Brigade	14th Hussars. 21st Cavalry. 22nd Cavalry. 6th Machine Gun Squadron. 6th Cavalry Brigade Supply and Transport Company.
7th Cavalry Brigade	13th Hussars. 13th Lancers. 14th Lancers. 7th Machine Gun Squadron. 7th Cavalry Brigade Supply and Transport Company.
Divisional Troops	"S" Battery, R.H.A. } = 12 guns. "V" Battery, R.H.A. } Cavalry Division Ammunition Column. Field Troop, R.E. Field Troop, 2nd Sappers and Miners. Signal Squadron (provisional). "A" Troop, 1st Wireless Signal Squadron. Cavalry Division Supply Column. Nos. 119 & 131 Combined Cavalry Field Ambulances. No. 4 Mobile Veterinary Section.

Ist CORPS.

3rd Division.

7th Infantry Brigade.	1st Connaught Rangers. 27th Punjabis. 91st Punjabis. 2/7th Gurkhas. No. 131 Machine Gun Company. 7th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.
8th Infantry Brigade.	1st Manchester Regiment. 47th Sikhs. 59th Rifles. 2/119th Infantry. No. 132 Machine Gun Company. 8th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.
9th Infantry Brigade.	2nd Dorsetshire Regiment. 93rd Infantry. 105th Mahrattas. 1/1st Gurkhas. No. 133 Machine Gun Company. 9th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.
Artillery.	4th Brigade, R.F.A. (7th, 14th and 66th Batteries) = 18 guns. 215th Brigade, R.F.A. (B.C. Batteries) = 8 guns. 524th (Howitzer) Battery, R.F.A. = 4 guns. B/69th (Howitzer) Battery, R.F.A. = 4 guns. Three small arm ammunition sections.

Engineers and Pioneers	18th, 20th and 21st Companies, Sappers and Miners.
	34th Sikh Pioneers.
	3rd Divisional Signal Company.
	3rd Divisional Troops Supply and Transport Company.
	3rd Division Supply Column.
Medical	Nos. 7 and 8 British Field Ambulances.
	Nos. 111, 112 and 113 Indian Field Ambulances.
	No. 11 Sanitary Section.
	No. 3 Mobile Veterinary Section.

7th Division.

19th Infantry Brigade.	1st Seaforth Highlanders.
	28th Punjabis.
	92nd Punjabis.
	125th Rifles.
	No. 134 Machine Gun Company.
	19th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.
21st Infantry Brigade.	2nd Black Watch.
	9th Bhopal Infantry.
	20th Punjabis.
	1/8th Gurkhas.
	No. 135 Machine Gun Company.
	21st Brigade Supply and Transport Company.
28th Infantry Brigade.	2nd Leicestershire Regiment.
	51st Sikhs.
	53rd Sikhs.
	56th Rifles.
	No. 136 Machine Gun Company.
	28th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.
Artillery.	9th Brigade, R.F.A. (19th, 20th and 28th Batteries) = 18 guns.
	56th Brigade, R.F.A. (A, B, C and D Batteries) = 16 guns.
	D/69th (Howitzer) Battery, R.F.A. = 4 guns.
	Three small arm ammunition sections.
Engineers and Pioneers.	1st, 3rd and 4th Companies, Sappers and Miners.
	121st Pioneers.
	7th Division Signal Company.
	7th Divisional Troops Supply and Transport Company
	7th Division Supply Column.
Medical.	Nos. 19 and 20th British Field Ambulances.
	Nos. 128, 129, 130 Indian Field Ambulances.
	No. 12 Sanitary Section.
	No. 2 Mobile Veterinary Section.

Corps Troops.

	32nd Lancers (less two squadrons).
	2/86th Battery, R.G.A. = 4 guns.
	159th Siege Battery, R.G.A. = 4 guns.
	No. 788 M.T. Company, A.S.C. (Caterpillar tractors).
	R.G.A. Watching Posts.
	Nos. 133, 134, 135 Trench Mortar Batteries.*
	Nos. 59, 93, 208 Anti-Aircraft Sections.
	1st Corps Signal Company.
	No. 1 Printing Section.
	No. 1 Litho Section.
Attached.	One section, Searchlight Company.
	One wagon station ("A" Troop) 1st Wireless Squadron.
	One pack station ("B" Troop) 1st Wireless Squadron.

* Each battery consisted of four 2-inch trench mortars.

IIIrd CORPS.

13th Division.

38th Infantry Brigade.	6th King's Own Royal Regiment (Lancaster).
	6th East Lancashire Regiment.
	6th Prince of Wales's Volunteers (South Lancashire).
	6th Loyal Regiment (North Lancashire).
	No. 38 Machine Gun Company.
	38th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.
39th Infantry Brigade.	9th Royal Warwickshire Regiment.
	7th Gloucestershire Regiment.
	9th Worcestershire Regiment.
	7th North Staffordshire Regiment.
	No. 39 Machine Gun Company.
	39th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.
40th Infantry Brigade.	8th Cheshire Regiment.
	8th Royal Welch Fusiliers.
	4th South Wales Borderers.
	5th Wiltshire Regiment.
	No. 40 Machine Gun Company.
	40th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.
	"D" Squadron, 1/1st Hertfordshire Yeomanry (temporarily with IIIrd Corps Troops).
	13th Divisional Cyclist Company.
Artillery.	55th Brigade, R.F.A. (A, B, C, D Batteries) = 16 guns.
	66th Brigade, R.F.A. (A. B, C, D Batteries) = 16 guns.
	A/69th (Howitzer) Battery, R.F.A. = 4 guns.
	72nd (Howitzer) Battery, R.G.A. = 4 guns.
	Three small arm ammunition sections.
Engineers and Pioneers.	71st, 72nd and 88th Field Companies, R.E.
	8th Welch Regiment (Pioneers).
	13th Divisional Signal Company.
	13th Divisional Troops Supply and Transport Company.
	10th Field Bakery.
	31st Field Butchery.
	13th Division Supply Column.
Medical.	39th, 40th and 41st Field Ambulances.
	No. 23 Sanitary Section.
	No. 24 Mobile Veterinary Section.

14th Division.

35th Infantry Brigade.	1/5th Buffs (East Kent Regiment).
	37th Dogras.
	102nd Grenadiers.
	2/4th Gurkhas.
	No. 185 Machine Gun Company.
	35th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.
36th Infantry Brigade.	1/4th Hampshire Regiment.
	26th Punjabis.
	62nd Punjabis.
	82nd Punjabis.
	No. 186 Machine Gun Company.
	36th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.
37th Infantry Brigade.	1/4th Devonshire Regiment.
	36th Sikhs.
	45th Sikhs.
	1/2nd Gurkhas.
	No. 187 Machine Gun Company.
	37th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.

Artillery.	13th Brigade, R.F.A. (2nd, 8th and 44th Batteries) = 18 guns. C/69th (Howitzer) Battery, R.F.A. = 4 guns. Three small arm ammunition sections.
Engineers and Pioneers.	12th, 13th and 15th Companies, Sappers and Miners. 128th Pioneers.
	14th Divisional Signal Company. 14th Divisional Troops Supply and Transport Company. 14th Division Supply Column.
Medical.	Nos. 1, 20, 21, 22, 135 Combined Field Ambulances. No. 13 Sanitary Section.
	No. 1 Mobile Veterinary Section.

Corps Troops.

Two squadrons, 32nd Lancers.*
No. 134 (Howitzer) Brigade, R.F.A. (60th, 61st Batteries) = 12 guns.
2/104th Heavy Battery, R.G.A. = 4 guns.
157th Heavy Battery, R.G.A. = 4 guns.
No. 789 M.T. Company, A.S.C. (Caterpillar tractors).
Nos. 136, 137, 138 Trench Mortar Batteries.
Nos. 80, 92 Anti-aircraft Sections.
IIIrd Corps Signal Company.
No. 2 Printing Section.
No. 2 Litho Section.

Attached.	Half section, Searchlight Company. One wagon station ("B" Troop) 1st Wireless Signal Squadron. One pack station ("B" Troop) 1st Wireless Signal Squadron.

ARMY TROOPS.

No. 14 Kite Balloon Section, R.N.A.S.
One squadron, 10th Lancers (attached IIIrd Corps).
Independent Divisional Ammunition Column.
No. 1 Bridging Train.
No. 2 (Mobile) Bridging Train (attached IIIrd Corps).
Army Signal Company.
1st (Anzac) Wireless Signal Squadron (less 3 wagon stations and 3 pack stations).
No. 30 Squadron, R.F.C. (less 2 machines with 15th Division).
"A," "C," "D," "E," "F" Stokes Mortar Batteries† (attached Ist Corps).
"B" and "G" Stokes Mortar Batteries† (attached IIIrd Corps).
No. 13 Light Armoured Motor Battery‡
64th Pioneers.
No. 33 Motor Ambulance Convoy (with transport of No. 773 M.T. Company, A.S.C.).

Attached.	Nos. 783 and 784 M.T. Companies, A.S.C. (Ford Vans). Two companies, 3rd Labour Corps. 4th Labour Corps.

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* From the 2nd January to 4th March 1917, the Corps Cavalry of the IIIrd Corps consisted of a composite cavalry regiment, comprising two squadrons 32nd Lancers, one squadron 10th Lancers and the squadron 1/1st Hertfordshire Yeomanry.

† Each battery consisted of eight 3-inch Stokes mortars.

‡ Arrived from England at Basra on 1st January 1917 and reached the Tigris front on 20th January 1917.

EUPHRATES FRONT.

(15th Division).

Nasiriya.

Headquarters, 15th Division.

12th Infantry Brigade.	1/5th Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey). No. 128 Machine Gun Company (less one section). 12th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.
34th Infantry Brigade.	2nd Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment. 31st Punjabis. 112th Infantry. 114th Mahrattas. No. 129 Machine Gun Company. 34th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.
42nd Infantry Brigade.	1/4th Dorsetshire Regiment. 2/5th Gurkhas. 2/6th Gurkhas. No. 130 Machine Gun Company. 42nd Brigade Supply and Transport Company.
	12th Cavalry
Artillery.	222nd Brigade, R.F.A. (A, B, C Batteries) = 12 guns. 77th Battery, R.G.A. = 4 guns. 26th Mountain Battery (7th Mountain Artillery Brigade) = 6 guns. 15th Divisional Ammunition Column.
Engineers and Pioneers.	3/1st (Northumbrian) Company, R.E. 1/3rd (Northumbrian) Company, R.E. Malerkotla Sapper and Miner Company. 48th Pioneers.
	No. 3 Section, Searchlight Company. No. 8 Lithographic Section. No. 10 Printing Section. 15th Divisional Signal Company. 15th Divisional Troops Supply and Transport Company 15th Division Supply Column.
Medical.	Nos. 3, 19, 23, 105, 109 Combined Field Ambulances. Six cars, No. 23 Motor Ambulance Convoy. No. 16 Sanitary Section.
Attached.	Volunteer Battery, less detachments (six 15-pounders and one 5-inch gun) = 7 guns. "B" Troop, 2nd Wireless Signal Squadron. 6th Labour Corps. Two machines, No. 30 Squadron, R.F.C. "M" Stokes Mortar Battery. Advanced Supply Depot, Supply and Transport. No. 27 Casualty Clearing Station. No. 83 Combined Stationary Hospital. No. 8 Advanced Depot Medical Stores. No. 16 Field Veterinary Section. Advanced Ordnance Depot.

Khamisiya.

Detachment, Volunteer Battery (one 15-pounder) = 1 gun.
90th Punjabis, less two companies (12th Brigade).

Suq ash Shuyukh.

One company, 90th Punjabis.

Beni Said.

Detachment, Volunteer Battery (one 15-pounder) = 1 gun.

One company, 90th Punjabis.

Junction Camp.

Detachment, Volunteer Battery (one 15-pounder) = 1 gun.

43rd Erinpura Regiment (less one company) (12th Brigade).

Half section, No. 128 Machine Gun Company.

Akaika.

One company, 43rd Erinpura Regiment.

Half section, No. 128 Machine Gun Company.

KARUN FRONT.

Ahwaz.

Headquarters.

23rd Cavalry (less two squadrons).

One section, 21st Mountain Battery = 2 guns.

Detachment, Anglo-Indian Battery (two 15-pounders) = 2 guns.

"C" Troop, 2nd Wireless Signal Squadron (less one pack station).

8th Rajputs.

97th Infantry (less one company).

Detachment, No. 596 M.T. Company, A.S.C.

No. 4 Indian Field Ambulance (two sections).

Shush.

Two squadrons, 23rd Cavalry.

One pack station, "C" Troop, 2nd Wireless Signal Squadron.

Tembeh.

One company, 97th Infantry.

BUSHIRE FRONT.

Bushire.

Headquarters.

One squadron, 15th Lancers.

Four Naval 12-pounders* }
One 7-pounder mountain gun } = 7 guns.
Two 15-pounder guns.† }

Half section, Searchlight Company.

14th Sikhs.

22nd Punjabis.

Detachment, No. 596 M.T. Company, A.S.C.

No. 51 Indian Stationary Hospital.

TIGRIS DEFENCES.

No. 1 Section. {

Qurna.

Headquarters, No. 1 Section Tigris Defences.

44th Infantry (less one platoon at Kurmat Ali, one platoon at Kubaish, one platoon at Sakrikiya, three platoons at Ezra's Tomb).

Qala Salih.

1½ companies, 96th Infantry. }

* Personnel from H.M. ships when required.

† Post guns with detachment of Indian Mountain artillerymen.

No. 2 Section.

Amara.
- Headquarters Tigris Defences.
- Headquarters, No. 2 Section, Tigris Defences.
- One troop, 10th Lancers.
- Anglo-Indian Battery (less detachments)—two 15-pounders = 2 guns.
- 1/6th Devonshire Regiment.
- 4th Rajputs.*
- 96th Infantry (less 1½ companies).

Mudelil.
- Headquarters Mobile Column.
- One squadron, 10th Lancers (less one troop).
- Detachment, Anglo-Indian Battery = 1 gun.
- One pack station, "A" Troop, 2nd Wireless Signal Squadron.
- 67th Punjabis (less 1½ companies).
- "M" Company, Supply and Transport (pack transport)
- "D" Section, No. 135 Indian Field Ambulance.

Fulaifila.
- 1½ companies, 67th Punjabis.*

No. 3 Section.

Ali Gharbi.
- Headquarters Mobile Column.
- One squadron, 10th Lancers.
- Detachment, Anglo-Indian Battery = 1 gun.
- One wagon and one pack station, "C" Troop, 2nd Wireless Signal Squadron.
- 2nd Rajputs (less two companies).*
- "L" Company, Supply and Transport (pack transport)
- "C" Section, No. 137 Indian Field Ambulance.

Shaikh Saad.
- Headquarters No. 3 Section, Tigris Defences.
- Headquarters Mobile Column.
- 10th Lancers (less three squadrons).
- One section, A/215th Battery, R.F.A. = 2 guns.
- One 4-inch gun, 1/104th Battery, R.G.A. = 1 gun.
- One section, Searchlight Company.
- One pack station, "C" Troop, 1st Wireless Signal Squadron.
- 1st Highland Light Infantry.
- Two companies, 2nd Rajputs.*
- "N" Company, Supply and Transport (pack transport).
- "D" Section, No. 122 Indian Field Ambulance.

Wadi.
- Detachment, Anglo-Indian Battery = 2 guns.
- One company, 3rd Brahmans.

Railway Blockhouse Line, west of Shaikh Saad.
- 3rd Brahmans (less one company).

Twin Canals and Railway Blockhouse Line.
- One section, A/215th Battery, R.F.A. = 2 guns.
- 2nd Norfolk Regiment.

Sinn, Dujaila and Railway Blockhouse Line.
- 1st Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry.
- Two 4-inch guns, 1/104th Battery, R.G.A. = 2 guns (at Dujaila).

Imam al Mansur and Blockhouses to the Hai.
- 2/124th Baluchistan Infantry.

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* These units also provided small guards for the permanent camping grounds—termed "marching posts"—which had been established at regular intervals between the main line of communication posts along the marching route up the Tigris between Amara and Shaikh Saad.

EUPHRATES DEFENCES.

No. 1 Section.

Basra.
- Headquarters Euphrates Defences.
- Signal Section.
- Headquarters No. 1 Section, Euphrates Defences.
- 6th Jats (less half battalion).
- Details of 1/4th Somerset Light Infantry, 2/9th Gurkhas and 1/10th Gurkhas.

*Shaiba**
- Headquarters Defences Reserves.
- Patiala Lancers (less two squadrons).
- One section, 21st Mountain Battery = 2 guns.
- 1/4th Somerset Light Infantry (less one company).
- No. 24 Combined Field Ambulance (less two sections).
- " Q " Company, Supply and Transport (less detachments).

No. 2 Section.

*Nukhaila.**
- Detachment, 6th Jats.

*Ratawi.**
- Headquarters No. 2 Section, Euphrates Defences.
- Half battalion, 6th Jats (less detachments).

*Ghabishiya.**
- Detachment, 6th Jats.
- Armoured Train.

No. 3 Section.

*Luqait.**
- Headquarters No. 3 Section, Euphrates Defences.
- Squadron, Patiala Lancers (less one troop).
- 1/10th Gurkhas (less one company).
- Detachment " Q " Company, Supply and Transport.
- One section, No. 24 Combined Field Ambulance.

*Jaleeb.**
- One troop, Patiala Lancers.
- One company, 1/10th Gurkhas.

No. 4 Section.

*Tel el Lam.**
- Headquarters No. 4 Section, Euphrates Defences.
- One squadron, Patiala Lancers (less one troop).
- 21st Mountain Battery (less two sections) = 2 guns.
- 2/9th Gurkhas (less one company).
- Detachment " Q " Company, Supply and Transport.
- One section, No. 24 Combined Field Ambulance.

*Tel Maghiya.**
- One troop, Patiala Lancers.
- One company, 2/9th Gurkhas (less one platoon).

*Safar.**
- One platoon, 2/9th Gurkhas.

LINE OF COMMUNICATION UNITS.

Basra.
- 3rd Echelon, General Headquarters.
- Headquarters Inspector-General Communications.
- Base Headquarters.
- L. of C. Signal Company (forming).
- Headquarters and " D " Troop, 2nd Wireless Signal Squadron, " E " Troop on river ships.
- Signal Service Park and Depôt.
- 73rd Carnatic Infantry.

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* These were all stations on the railway line running from Basra to Nasiriya.

Basra—cont.

79th Carnatic Infantry.
Nos. 1, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 Labour Corps, R.E.
21st, 22nd, 24th Labour Corps.
2nd Porter Corps.
Nos. 1 and 2 British Base Depôts.
Nos. 1, 2 and 3 Indian Base Depôts.
Indian General Base Depôt.
No. 596 M.T. Company, A.S.C. (less detachments).
No. 695 M.T. Company, A.S.C.
Nos. 16 and 18 Field Veterinary Sections.
Base Veterinary Store Depôt.
Headquarters Base Remount Depôt and three Remount squadrons.
Nos. 49 and 50 Mobile Workshops (Ordnance).
Nos. 3, 33, 40, 133 British General Hospitals.
Nos. 8, 9, 10, 20, 22, 24, 25 Indian General Hospitals.
Basra Isolation Hospital.
Officers' Hospital, Bait Naama.
No. 23 Motor Ambulance Convoy (less thirty cars).
Nos. 10, 27, 29, 46, 99 Sanitary Sections.
No. 1 General Medical Store Depôt.
No. 10 British Base Depôt Medical Stores.

Mohammerah.

British Convalescent Depôt.
Indian Convalescent Depôt.
No. 27 Indian General Hospital.

Qurna.

Headquarters Administrative Post.
No. 57 Indian Stationary Hospital.

Amara.

Headquarters Administrative Post.
"A" Troop, 2nd Wireless Signal Squadron (less one pack station).
122nd Infantry.
Half, 6th Porter Corps.
No. 23 British Stationary Hospital.
No. 70 Indian Stationary Hospital.
Nos. 1, 2, 32 British General Hospitals.
Nos. 12, 21, 23, 42 Indian General Hospitals.
Isolation Hospital.
Officers' Convalescent Depôt.
British Convalescent Depôt.
Indian Convalescent Depôt.
Fifteen Cars, No. 23 Motor Ambulance Convoy.
Nos. 17 and 100 Sanitary Sections.
No. 3 Advanced Depôt Medical Stores.
Headquarters and two squadrons Remount Depôt (less two sections).
Nos. 9 and 10 Field Veterinary Sections.

Shaikh Saad.

Headquarters Advanced Base.
No. 3 Bridging Train (less detachment).
Engineer Field Park.
2nd Labour Corps.
Two companies, 3rd Labour Corps.
10th Labour Corps.

Shaikh Saad—cont.

Porter Corps—3rd, 5th, 7th and 1st, 4th, 6th (less detachments).
Advanced Signal Park.
No. 16 British Casualty Clearing Station.
Nos. 15, 19, 20 Combined Casualty Clearing Stations.
No. 31 British Stationary Hospital.
No. 61 Indian Stationary Hospital.
Combined Convalescent Depôt.
Nos. 6 and 7 Advanced Depôts Medical Stores.
Nine Cars, No. 23 Motor Ambulance Convoy.
Nos. 14 and 101 Sanitary Sections.
No. 7 Field Veterinary Section.
Advanced Veterinary Store Depôt.
Two Remount sections.

Arab Village.

Headquarters Riverhead.
Detachment, No. 3 Bridging Train.
Detachments, 4th and 6th Porter Corps.
No. 5 Advanced Depôt Medical Stores.
Ammunition Park.

Twin Canals.

Headquarters Administrative Post.
Detachment, 1st Porter Corps.

Sinn.

Headquarters Administrative Post.

Imam al Mansur.

Headquarters Administrative Post.

OTHER UNITS ON LINE OF COMMUNICATION.

Basra.

No. 14 Light Armoured Motor Battery* (less half Battery)—for 15th Division.
2/2nd (Northumbrian) Field Company, R.E.—attached L. of C.
Aircraft Park, R.F.C.

Qala Salih.

"A" Section, No. 137 Indian Field Ambulance.

Amara.

Advanced Echelon, Aircraft Park.

Shaikh Saad.

Tehri-Garhwal Sapper and Miner Company.
Military Railway Company.

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* Just arrived from England.

APPENDIX XXXVII.

I.E.F. "D" Operation Order No. 11.

22nd February, 1917.

1. Reconnaissances indicate that the right bank of the Tigris on the Tigris front is clear of the enemy, except as stated in paragraph 2 (*e*) below.

2. The enemy's troops on the Tigris front are now estimated as follows :—
(*a*) *Sannaiyat position* : 3,650 rifles, 29 guns.
(*b*) *River line, Sannaiyat to Kut* : 1,000 rifles, 190 sabres, 10 guns.
(*c*) *Kut and Shumran peninsulas, left bank Tigris* : 3,350 rifles, 100 sabres, 44 guns.
(*d*) *Between Shumran and Bughaila, left bank Tigris* : 1,150 rifles, 6 guns.
(*e*) *Between Shumran and Bughaila, right bank Tigris* : 500 rifles, 210 sabres, 2 guns.

In addition to his substantial inferiority compared to ourselves in men, guns and ammunition, many of his troops are demoralised, as evidenced by the ready way in which they surrendered in the Dahra Bend, and the difficulties with which he has now to contend from many points of view are emphasised in communications received from time to time by the Army Commander from outside sources.

3. Prompt and vigorous action to bring him once more to battle is under these circumstances essential, and in order to do this with decisive results it is intended to throw the IIIrd Corps across the river in the neighbourhood of Shumran so as to enclose his forces on the Tigris front from the west, whilst the Ist Corps continues to act vigorously against Sannaiyat and along the river line from Sannaiyat to Kut, with the object of engaging his attention and compelling him to detach as many troops and guns as possible towards Sannaiyat. The Cavalry Division will be suitably disposed to take advantage of the situation as events develop.

4. In order to give effect to the above :—

(*a*) The Ist Corps has been directed to assault and capture a portion of the Sannaiyat position to-day, and will continue to act vigorously in that neighbourhood so as to draw every man and gun possible away from the Kut and Shumran peninsulas.

(*b*) The Ist Corps will also display general activity along the river front from Sannaiyat to Kut from now onwards, and during the night of the 22nd/23rd will carry out a raid across the river at a time to be selected by the General Officer Commanding Ist Corps, but not later than 2 a.m. on the 23rd. The place for this raid to be selected, and the arrangements for carrying it out to be made, by the G.O.C. Ist Corps. Guns, machine guns and searchlights to be posted ready to support the raid instantly as necessary. The object of this operation is to induce the enemy to believe that a serious crossing is being attempted at that point, and to cause him to move troops and guns in that direction.

(*c*) The IIIrd Corps to commence the passage of the river in the Shumran bend early on the morning of the 23rd under arrangements to be made by the G.O.C. IIIrd Corps. The crossing once commenced to be pushed on with ceaseless vigour. The covering party to cross at several points so as to obtain secure footings on the left bank to cover further disembarkations. Guns and machine guns to be suitably disposed so as to support the troops crossing instantly as necessary. The construction of a bridge at or near M.34. to be commenced as early as practicable. As the covering parties are gradually reinforced, troops to be pushed forward so as to clear the left bank of the Tigris both towards Dahra and Shumran, care being taken that these troops are adequately supported as they advance. Guns and machine guns to be ready to assist these advances by dealing with any opposition and with any Turkish movement intended to interfere with the operations in progress.

As soon as an adequate force with suitable reserves has been assembled on the left bank, and any hostile troops opposing further progress accurately located, an assault under an intense artillery bombardment to be deliberately concerted and delivered. The importance of pushing up reserves close to the fighting troops, and so constantly adding to our weight against the enemy until the whole of the IIIrd Corps is transferred to the left bank is especially emphasised. Troops to carry an adequacy of ammunition and their day's ration, in addition to an iron ration, as supply in the first instance may be slow. Carefully laid plans, vigorously carried out with method and precision, will ensure success.

(*d*) The Cavalry Division, equipped as lightly as possible, and carrying a day's ration as well as an iron ration on the man and a day's grain on the horse, to be ready to move in any direction at an hour's notice at any time after 9 a.m. on the 23rd.

(*e*) The mission of No. 30 Squadron, Royal Flying Corps, on the 23rd will be :—

To keep the Army Commander and subordinate commanders (especially those engaged in the crossing of the river) fully informed as to the situation.

To co-operate with the artillery of the IIIrd Corps so as to convey definite information as to artillery targets and especially as to any hostile guns which may open on our bridge.

To prevent any hostile aeroplane from rising so as to observe the exact position of our bridge.

To co-operate with the artillery of the Ist Corps.

5. The evacuation of the wounded from both banks of the Tigris will be carried out as directed in paragraph 8 of I.E.F. " D " Operation Order No. 9.*

6. Official time will be notified to all concerned from Advanced G.H.Q. daily while these operations are in progress at 6 a.m. and at noon.

7. Reports to be rendered to Advanced G.H.Q. hourly from 6 a.m. on the 23rd and oftener as necessary till further orders by all formations actually carrying out operations against the enemy. Ist Corps to report progress specially as regards the raid on the night of the 22nd/23rd.

Acknowledge by wire.

(Sd.) A. W. MONEY,
Major-General,
Chief of the General Staff.

Issued at $\frac{\text{8.20 a.m.}}{\text{9.20 a.m.}}$

Copy No. 1 to Army Commander.
" " 2 to C.G.S.
" " 3 to R.F.C. by hand—9.20 a.m.
" " 4 to Cavalry Division. } Special Despatch-rider, 8.20 a.m.
" " 5 to Ist Corps. }
" " 6 to IIIrd Corps. }
" " 7-8, War Diary.
" " 9, Spare.

* Not reproduced here.

APPENDIX XXXVIII.

British Proclamation on capturing Baghdad.

To the People of Baghdad Vilayet.

In the name of my King, and in the name of the peoples over whom he rules, I address you as follows :—

Our military operations have as their object the defeat of the enemy, and the driving of him from these territories. In order to complete this task, I am charged with absolute and supreme control of all regions in which British troops operate ; but our armies do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators.

Since the days of Hulagu your city and your lands have been subject to the tyranny of strangers, your palaces have fallen into ruins, your gardens have sunk in desolation, and your forefathers and yourselves have groaned in bondage. Your sons have been carried off to wars not of your seeking, your wealth has been stripped from you by unjust men and squandered in distant places.

Since the days of Midhat the Turks have talked of reforms, yet do not the ruins and wastes of to-day testify the vanity of those promises ?

It is the wish not only of my King and his peoples, but it is also the wish of the great Nations with whom he is in alliance, that you should prosper even as in the past, when your lands were fertile, when your ancestors gave to the world literature, science and art, and when Baghdad city was one of the wonders of the world.

Between your people and the dominions of my King there has been a close bond of interest. For two hundred years have the merchants of Baghdad and Great Britain traded together in mutual profit and friendship. On the other hand, the Germans and Turks, who have despoiled you and yours, have for twenty years made Baghdad a centre of power from which to assail the power of the British and the Allies of the British in Persia and Arabia. Therefore the British Government cannot remain indifferent as to what takes place in your country now or in the future, for in duty to the interests of the British people and their Allies the British Government cannot risk that being done in Baghdad again which has been done by the Turks and Germans during the war.

But you, people of Baghdad, whose commercial prosperity and whose safety from oppression and invasion must ever be a matter of the closest concern to the British Government, are not to understand that it is the wish of the British Government to impose upon you alien institutions. It is the hope of the British Government that the aspiration of your philosophers and writers shall be realised, and that once again the people of Baghdad shall flourish, enjoying their wealth and substance under institutions which are in consonance with their sacred laws and their racial ideals. In Hejaz the Arabs have expelled the Turks and Germans who oppressed them, and proclaimed the Sharif Hussain as their King, and his Lordship rules in independence and freedom and is the Ally of the Nations who are fighting against the power of Turkey and Germany ; so, indeed, are the noble Arabs, the Lords of Kuwait, Nejd and Asir.

Many noble Arabs have perished in the cause of Arab freedom at the hands of those alien rulers, the Turks, who oppressed them. It is the determination of the Government of Great Britain and the Great Powers allied to Great Britain, that these noble Arabs shall not have suffered in vain. It is the hope and desire of the British people and the Nations in alliance with them that the Arab race may rise once more to greatness and renown among the peoples of the Earth, and that it shall bind itself together to this end in unity and concord.

O people of Baghdad, remember that for twenty-six generations you have suffered under strange tyrants who have ever endeavoured to set one Arab house against another in order that they might profit by your dissensions. This policy is abhorrent to Great Britain and her Allies, for there can be neither peace nor prosperity where there is enmity and misgovernment. Therefore I am commanded to invite you, through your nobles and elders and representatives, to participate in the management of your own civil affairs in collaboration with the political representatives of Great Britain who accompany the British Army, so that you may be united with your kinsmen in North, East, South and West in realising the aspirations of your Race.

APPENDIX XXXIX.

Distribution of the Troops of the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force on the 30th April, 1917.

TIGRIS FRONT.

General Headquarters - Baghdad.

Cavalry Division—

6th Cavalry Brigade.	14th Hussars. 21st Cavalry. 22nd Cavalry. 6th Machine Gun Squadron. 6th Cavalry Brigade Signal Troop. 6th Cavalry Brigade Supply and Transport Company.	With Marshall's Column on the Adhaim and about Sindiya; except 22nd Calvary at Baquba, 21st Cavalry, and one section "S" Battery with Cobbe's Column.
7th Cavalry Brigade.	13th Hussars. 13th Lancers. 14th Lancers. 7th Machine Gun Squadron. 7th Cavalry Brigade Signal Troop. 7th Cavalry Brigade Supply and Transport Company.	
Divisional Troops.	"S" Battery, R.H.A. = 6 guns. "V" Battery, R.H.A. = 6 guns (temporarily only 4 guns in use). Cavalry Division Ammunition Column. Field Troop, R.E. Field Troop, 2nd Sappers and Miners. Signal Squadron (provisional). Three pack stations, 1st Wireless Signal Squadron. Cavalry Division Supply Column. Nos. 119 and 131 Combined Cavalry Field Ambulances. No. 30 Sanitary Section. Nos. 4 and 5 Mobile Veterinary Sections (*en route*).	

Ist CORPS.

3rd Division - Divisional headquarters at Baghdad.

7th Infantry Brigade.	1st Connaught Rangers. 27th Punjabis. 91st Punjabis. 2/7th Gurkhas. No. 131 Machine Gun Company. 7th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.	Falluja area.
8th Infantry Brigade.	1st Manchester Regiment. 47th Sikhs. 59th Rifles. 2/124th Baluchistan Infantry. No. 132 Machine Gun Company. 8th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.	Temporarily with Marshall's Column, except 2/124th Infantry with Cobbe's Column on Tigris right bank, about Samarra.
9th Infantry Brigade.	2nd Dorsetshire Regiment. 93rd Infantry. 105th Mahrattas. 1/1st Gurkhas. No. 133 Machine Gun Company. 9th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.	Baghdad area, Tigris right bank.

Artillery.	4th Brigade, R.F.A. (7th, 14th and 66th Batteries) = 18 guns.	With Marshall's Column, except 66th Battery in Falluja area.
	215th Brigade, R.F.A. ("A" and "B" Batteries) = 8 guns.	Baghdad area, Tigris right bank.
	524th Howitzer Battery, R.F.A. = 4 guns.	One Section with Cobbe's Column. One section in Falluja area.
	B/69th Howitzer Battery, R.F.A. = 4 guns.	With Marshall's Column.
	Three small arm ammuntion sections.	
Engineers and Pioneers.	18th, 20th and 21st Companies, Sappers and Miners.	18th Company—Baghdad area, Tigris right bank. 20th Company—ditto, less half company with Marshall's Column. 21st Company—Falluja area.
	34th Sikh Pioneers.	Two Companies—Baghdad, area, Tigris right bank. One company—Falluja area. One company—with Cobbe's Column.

3rd Divisional Signal Company.
3rd Divisional Troops Supply and Transport Company.
3rd Division Supply Column.

Medical.	Nos. 110, 111, 112, 113 Combined Field Ambulances.
	No. 11 Sanitary Section.

No. 3 Mobile Veterinary Section.

7th Division - With Cobbe's Column, about Samarra.

19th Infantry Brigade.	1st Seaforth Highlanders.
	28th Punjabis.
	92nd Punjabis.
	125th Rifles.
	No. 134 Machine Gun Company.
	19th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.
21st Infantry Brigade.	2nd Black Watch.
	9th Bhopal Infantry.
	20th Punjabis.
	1/8th Gurkhas.
	No. 135 Machine Gun Company.
	21st Brigade Supply and Transport Company.
28th Infantry Brigade.	2nd Leicestershire Regiment.
	51st Sikhs.
	53rd Sikhs.
	56th Rifles.
	No. 136 Machine Gun Company.
	28th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.

Artillery.
- 9th Brigade, R.F.A. (19th, 20th and 28th Batteries) = 18 guns.
- 56th Brigade, R.F.A. ("A," "B," "C" and "D" Batteries = 16 guns.
- D/69th Howitzer Battery, R.F.A. = 4 guns.
- Three small arm ammunition Sections.

Engineers and Pioneers.
- 1st, 3rd and 4th Companies, Sappers and Miners.
- 121st Pioneers.

7th Division Signal Company.
7th Divisional Troops Supply and Transport Company.
7th Division Supply Column.

Medical.
- Nos. 127, 128, 129, 130 Combined Field Ambulances.
- No. 12 Sanitary Section.

No. 2 Mobile Veterinary Section.

Corps Troops—

32nd Lancers (less two squadrons)
- Headquarters and one squadron with Cobbe's Column.
- One squadron, Baghdad area, Tigris right bank.

2/86th Battery, R.G.A. = 4 (60-pounder) guns—with Cobbe's Column.

Temporarily at Shumran:
- 157th Battery, R.G.A. = 4 (60-pounder) guns.
- No. 789 M.T. Company, A.S.C. (Caterpillar tractors).
- 159th Siege Battery, R.G.A. = 4 (6-inch) howitzers.
- No. 788 M.T. Company, A.S.C. (Caterpillar tractors).

Nos. 133, 134, 135 Trench Mortar Batteries—at Kut.

No. 59 Anti-aircraft Section—Baghdad area.
No. 93 Anti-aircraft Section—with Cobbe's Column.
No. 208 Anti-aircraft Section—at Shumran.

1st Corps Signal Company.

No. 1 Printing Section.
No. 1 Litho Section.

Attached.
- One section, Searchlight Company.
- Two pack stations, 1st Wireless Squadron.
- No. 3 Combined Field Ambulance (Convalescent Depot).

IIIrd CORPS.

13th Division - With Marshall's Column.

38th Infantry Brigade.
- 6th King's Own Royal Regiment (Lancaster).
- 6th East Lancashire Regiment.
- 6th Prince of Wales' Volunteers (South Lancashire).
- 6th Loyal Regiment (North Lancashire).
- No. 38 Machine Gun Company.
- 38th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.

39th Infantry Brigade.
- 9th Royal Warwickshire Regiment.
- 7th Gloucestershire Regiment.
- 9th Worcestershire Regiment.
- 7th North Staffordshire Regiment.
- No. 39 Machine Gun Company.
- 39th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.

40th Infantry Brigade.	8th Cheshire Regiment. 8th Royal Welch Fusiliers. 4th South Wales Borderers. 5th Wiltshire Regiment. No. 40 Machine Gun Company. 40th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.
	" D " Squadron, 1/1st Hertfordshire Yeomanry.
	13th Division Cyclist Company.
Artillery.	55th Brigade, R.F.A. (" A," " B," " C," " D " Batteries) = 16 guns. 66th Brigade, R.F.A. (" A," " B," " C," " D " Batteries) = 16 guns. One section with Cobbe's Column. A/69th (Howitzer) Battery, R.F.A. = 4 guns. 72nd (Howitzer) Battery, R.G.A. = 4 guns. Three small arm ammunition sections.
Engineers and Pioneers.	71st, 72nd and 88th Field Companies, R.E. 8th Welch Regiment (Pioneers).
	13th Divisional Signal Company.
	13th Divisional Troops Supply and Transport Company. 10th Field Bakery. 31st Field Butchery. 13th Division Supply Column.
Medical.	39th, 40th and 41st British Field Ambulances. No. 28 Sanitary Section.
	No. 24 Mobile Veterinary Section.

14th Division - Divisional headquarters at Hinaidi, 3½ miles south of Baghdad, on Tigris left bank.

35th Infantry Brigade.	1/5th Buffs (East Kent Regiment). 37th Dogras. 102nd Grenadiers. 2/4th Gurkhas. No. 185 Machine Gun Company. 35th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.	With Marshall's Column.
36th Infantry Brigade.	1/4th Hampshire Regiment. 26th Punjabis. 62nd Punjabis. 82nd Punjabis. No. 186 Machine Gun Company. 36th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.	Garrison of Baghdad city.
37th Infantry Brigade.	2nd Norfolk Regiment. 67th Punjabis.	Baqua area.
	1/2nd Gurkhas. 2/9th Gurkhas.	With Marshall's Column.
	No. 187 Machine Gun Company—half Baquba, half Marshall's Column. 37th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.	
Artillery.	13th Brigade, R.F.A. (2nd, 8th and 44th Batteries) = 18 guns. C/69th (Howitzer) Battery R.F.A. = 4 guns.	With Marshall's Column.
	Three small arm ammunition sections.	
Engineers. and Pioneers.	12th Company, Sappers and Miners. 13th Company, Sappers and Miners.	Hinaidi.
	15th Company, Sappers and Miners—Baquba. 128th Pioneers—on Tigris right bank, attached to Ist Corps for railway work.	

14th Divisional Signal Company.
14th Divisional Troops Supply and Transport Company.
14th Division Supply Column.

Medical. { Nos. 20, 21, 22, 135 Combined Field Ambulances.
No. 13 Sanitary Section. }

No. 1 Mobile Veterinary Section.

Corps Troops—

Two squadrons, 32nd Lancers—with Cobbe's Column.

134th Howitzer Brigade, R.F.A. (60th and 61st Batteries) = 12 guns. } With Marshall's Column.
2/104th Heavy Battery, R.G.A. (60-pounders) = 4 guns. } With Marshall's Column.

Nos. 136, 137, 138 Trench Mortar Batteries—at Kut.

No. 80 Anti-aircraft Section—with Marshall's Column.
No. 92 Anti-aircraft Section—Baghdad area.

IIIrd Corps Signal Company.

No. 2 Printing Section.
No. 2 Litho Section.

Attached. {
Half section, Searchlight Company.
One wagon station. } 1st Wireless Signal Squadron.
One pack station. } 1st Wireless Signal Squadron.
No. 20 British Field Ambulance. } Convalescent Depot.
Three sections, No. 1 Indian Field Ambulance. } Convalescent Depot.
}

ARMY TROOPS.

(In Baghdad area, except where otherwise stated.)

No. 14 Kite Balloon Section, R.N.A.S.—at Basra.
No. 30 Squadron, Royal Flying Corps.
Independent Divisional Ammunition Column.
No. 1 Bridging Train.
No. 2 (Mobile) Bridging Train—with Cobbe's Column.
Malerkotla Sappers and Miners.
Tehri-Garhwal Sappers and Miners.
Army Signal Company.
Headquarters 1st (Anzac) Wireless Signal Squadron, with two wagon stations.
"A," "B," "C," "D," "E," "F," "G," "H," "I," "J" Stokes Mortar Batteries—at Kut.
No. 13 Light Armoured Motor Battery—with Cobbe's Column.
No. 14 Light Armoured Motor Battery—*en route* from Nasiriya (arrived Baghdad, 1st May, 1917).
64th Pioneers.
Army Troops Supply and Transport Company.
No. 33 Motor Ambulance Convoy (with transport of No. 773 M.T. Company, A.S.C.).

Attached. { No. 783 and 784 M.T. Companies, A.S.C. (Ford Vans).
Two companies, 3rd Labour Corps.
4th Labour Corps. }

15th Division - Assembling on Tigris front.

15th Division headquarters.

42nd Infantry Brigade. {
1/4th Dorsetshire Regiment.
1/5th Gurkhas.
2/5th Gurkhas.
2/6th Gurkhas.
No. 130 Machine Gun Company.
42nd Brigade Supply and Transport Company.
}

(15th Division headquarters and 42nd Infantry Brigade:) At Hinaidi, 3½ miles S.E. of Baghdad on Tigris left bank.

34th Infantry Brigade.	31st Punjabis	At Basra, *en route* from Nasiriya.
	112th Infantry.	
	114th Mahrattas.	
	No. 129 Machine Gun Company.	
	34th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.	
	12th Cavalry (less two squadrons).	*En route* from Nasiriya.
Artillery.	222nd Brigade, R.F.A. (two batteries) = 8 guns.	
	Three small arm ammunition sections.	
	Part of 15th Divisional Ammunition Column.	
	15th Divisional Signal Company.	
	Part of 15th Divisional Troops Supply and Transport Company.	
	Part of 15th Division Supply Column.	
Medical.	Nos. 19, 23, 105 Combined Field Ambulances.	
	No. 27 Combined Casualty Clearing Station.	
	No. 18 Sanitary Section.	
	No. 6 Mobile Veterinary Section.	

EUPHRATES FRONT.

Nasiriya (Headquarters - Euphrates Front)—

	Two squadrons, 12th Cavalry.	
	26th Mountain Battery = 6 guns.	
	Volunteer Battery, less detachments (six 15-pounders and one 5-inch gun) = 7 guns.	
	" B " Troop, 2nd Wireless Signal Squadron.	
	1/4th Somerset Light Infantry.	
	1/10th Gurkhas.	
Medical.	No. 24 Combined Field Ambulance.	
	No. 31 Sanitary Section.	
	No. 83 Combined Stationary Hospital.	
	No. 8 Advanced Depot of Medical Stores.	
	Detachment, No. 23 Motor Ambulance Convoy.	
	" M " Stokes Mortar Battery.	
	One section, Searchlight Company.	
	Detachment, Engineer Field Park.	
	Detachment, Works Company.	
	No. 2 Camel Corps.	
	No. 6 Labour Corps.	
	Advanced Supply Depot.	
Attached from 15th Division.	B/222nd Battery, R.F.A. = 4 guns.	
	77th (Howitzer) Battery, R.G.A. = 4 guns.	
	Part of 15th Divisional Ammunition Column.	
	448th, 450th and 451st Companies, R.E.	
	48th Pioneers.	
	12th Infantry Brigade.: 1/5th Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey).	Under orders for Tigris Front.
	12th Infantry Brigade.: 43rd Erinpura Regiment.	
	12th Infantry Brigade.: 90th Punjabis.	
	2nd Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment.	
	Detachments of 15th Divisional Troops Supply and Transport Company and 15th Division Supply Column.	
	No. 108 Combined Field Ambulance.	

Khamisiya—

Detachment, Volunteer Battery (one 15-pounder).
42nd Deoli Regiment (less one company).

Suq ash Shuyukh—

Detachment, 113th Infantry.

Beni Saad—
Detachment, Volunteer Battery (one 15-pounder).
One company, 42nd Deoli Regiment.

Junction Camp—
Detachment, Volunteer Battery (one 15-pounder).
113th Infantry, less detachments.

Akaika—
One company, 113th Infantry.

KARUN FRONT.

Ahwaz (Headquarters)—
23rd Cavalry (less two Squadrons).
One section, 21st Mountain Battery = 2 guns.
Detachment, Anglo-Indian Battery (two 15-pounders) = 2 guns.
"C" Troop, 2nd Wireless Signal Squadron (less one pack station).
8th Rajputs.
97th Infantry (less one company).
Detachment, No. 596 M.T. Company, A.S.C.
No. 4 Indian Field Ambulance (two sections).
No. 5 Combined Field Ambulance (modified).
No. 30 Casualty Clearing Station.

Shush—
Two squadrons, 23rd Cavalry.
One pack station, "C" Troop, 2nd Wireless Signal Squadron.

Tembeh—
One company, 97th Infantry.

TIGRIS DEFENCES.

No. 1 Section.

Qurna—(With detachments at Kurmat Ali, Kubaish, Sakrikiya, Ezra's Tomb and Qala Salih)—44th Merwara Infantry.

Amara—
Headquarters, Tigris Defences.
Headquarters, No. 1 Section, Tigris Defences.
Half squadron, 10th Lancers.
Anglo-Indian Battery (less detachments), two 15-pounders = 2 guns.
1/4th Devonshire Regiment.
36th Sikhs.
45th Sikhs.
No. 2 Section, Line of Communication Signal Company.
No. 9 Combined Field Ambulance (modified).

No. 2 Section.

Mudelil—
One company, 4th Rajputs.

Ali Gharbi—
One company, 4th Rajputs.

Shaikh Saad—
Headquarters, No. 2 Section, Tigris Defences.
10th Lancers (less three squadrons).
C/215th Battery, R.F.A. (less one section) = 2 guns.
1st Highland Light Infantry.
3rd Brahmans.
4th Rajputs (less two companies).
One pack station, "A" Troop, 2nd Wirless Signal Squadron.
"N" Company, Pack Pony Corps.
Searchlight Company (less three sections).
Three armoured cars.
No. 8 Combined Field Ambulance (modified).

Wadi—
Detachment, Anglo-Indian Battery (two 15-pounders) = 2 guns.
One company, 96th Infantry.
Hanna—
Detachment, Anglo-Indian Battery (one 15-pounder) = 1 gun.
One company, 14th Sikhs.
Arab Village—
14th Sikhs (less three companies).
Kut Area—
One squadron, 10th Lancers.
2nd Rajputs.
No. 3 Section. Two companies, 14th Sikhs.
Shumran—
Detachment, Anglo-Indian Battery (one 15-pounder) = 1 gun.
Two companies, 119th Infantry.
Bughaila—
Headquarters, No. 3 Section, Tigris Defences.
One squadron, 10th Lancers.
One section, C/215th Battery, R.F.A. = 2 guns.
96th Infantry (less one company).
119th Infantry (less two companies).
One pack station, 1st Wireless Signal Squadron.
"M" Company, Supply and Transport.
No. 6 Combined Field Ambulance (modified).

Sharqi—
One company, 1/6th Gurkhas.
Aziziya—
Headquarters, No. 4 Section, Tigris Defences.
Half squadron, 10th Lancers.
One 4-inch post gun.
1st Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry (*en route*).
Guides Infantry.
1/6th Gurkhas (less three companies).
One pack station, 1st Wireless Signal Squadron.
"L" Company, Supply and Transport.
No. 4 Section. No. 7 Combined Field Ambulance (modified).
Zor—
One section, 10th Lancers.
One company, 1/6th Gurkhas.
Lajj—
Three sections, 10th Lancers.
One company, 1/6th Gurkhas.
Ctesiphon—
Two companies, 87th Punjabis.
Diyala—
87th Punjabis (less two companies).

EUPHRATES DEFENCES.

Fao—
Detachment, Anglo-Indian Battalion.
Detachment, 73rd Carnatic Infantry.
Detachment of Royal Artillery details.
Detachment of Royal Engineers details.
Basra—
Headquarters, Euphrates Defences.
No. 3 Section, Line of Communication Signal Company.

No. 1 Section.
Headquarters, No. 1 Section, Euphrates Defences.
One section, Royal Field Artillery, 18-pounder (Base Depot).
One company, 1/6th Devonshire Regiment.
24th Punjabis (less detachments).

Shaiba—
Headquarters, Defences Reserves.
Patiala Lancers (less two squadrons).
One section, 21st Mountain Battery = 2 guns.
1/6th Devonshire Regiment (less 1½ companies).
"Q" Company, Supply and Transport (less detachments).

No. 2 Section.

*Shaiba Station**—
One platoon, 6th Jats.
*Nukhaila**—
Detachment, 24th Punjabis.
*Ratawi**—
Headquarters, No. 2 Section, Euphrates Defences.
One company, 24th Punjabis.
*Ghabishiya**—
One company, 24th Punjabis.
No. 2 Armoured Train.

No. 3 Section.

*Luqait**—
Headquarters, No. 3 Section, Euphrates Defences.
One squadron, Patiala Lancers (less one troop).
99th Infantry (less three companies).
Detachment, "Q" Company, Supply and Transport.
*Jaleeb**—
One troop, Patiala Lancers.
One company, 99th Infantry.

No. 4 Section.

*Tel el Lam**—
Headquarters, No. 4 Section, Euphrates Defences.
Half company, 1/6th Devonshire Regiment.
One squadron, Patiala Lancers (less one troop).
21st Mountain Battery (less two sections) = 2 guns.
One company, 99th Infantry.
Detachment, "Q" Company, Supply and Transport.
No. 1 Armoured Train.
*Tel Maghiya**—
One troop, Patiala Lancers.
One company, 99th Infantry (less one platoon).
*Safar**—
One platoon, 99th Infantry.

LINE OF COMMUNICATION UNITS.

Basra—
3rd Echelon, General Headquarters.
Headquarters, Inspector-General Communications.
Headquarters, Directorate of Works.
Headquarters, Directorate Inland Water Transport.
Headquarters, Directorate Port Administration and Conservancy.
Headquarters, Directorate Sea Transport.
Headquarters, Directorate Railways.
Base Headquarters.
Headquarters and "D" Troop (less detachments), 2nd Wireless Signal Squadron, "E" Troop (on river ships).
Signal Service Park and Depot.
Headquarters and No. 1 Section, L. of C. Signal Company.
73rd Carnatic Infantry.
79th Carnatic Infantry.
80th Carnatic Infantry.
One company, 122nd Rajputana Infantry.

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* Stations on the Basra-Nasiriya railway.

Basra—cont.

Nos. 1, 2 and 3 British Base Depots.
Nos. 1, 2 and 3 Indian Base Depots.
Indian General Base Depot.
Supply Reinforcement Depot.

No. 1 Works Company.
Reclamation Section.
Base Park Company (less detachments).
Egyptian Labour Corps (less detachments).
Nos. 1, 5, 7, 8 (two companies), 21, 22 Labour Corps.
Chinese Porter Corps.

Headquarters and Nos. 1 and 2 Electrical and Mechanical Companies, R.E. (less detachments).
Base Transport Depot—" A " to " G " Companies.
Base Mechanical Transport Depot.
Nos. 596, 729 and 730 M.T. Companies, A.S.C.
7th and 42nd Mule Corps.
Nos. 1 and 2 Bullock Corps.

Headquarters, Base Remount Depot.
Two Remount squadrons.
Base Veterinary Store Depot.
Nos. 6 and 18 Field Veterinary Sections.

Base Ordnance Depot.
Base Post Office.
Base Stationery Depot.

Prisoners of War Camps.

Nos. 3, 33, 40 and 133 British General Hospitals.
Nos. 8, 9, 10, 20, 22, 24, 25 and 27 Indian General Hospitals.
Nos. 10, 27, 29 and 99 Sanitary Sections.
Combined Base Depot of Medical Stores.
Officers' Hospital, Bait Naama.
Isolation Hospital.
No. 23 Motor Ambulance Convoy (less thirty cars).
Medical Reinforcement Camp.

Mohammerah—

British Convalescent Depot.
Indian Convalescent Depot.

Qurna—

Headquarters, Administrative Post.
Detachment, Base Park Company.
Detachment, No. 3 Works Company.
Detachment, Egyptian Labour Corps.
" J " Company, Supply and Transport.
One Company, 6th Porter Corps.
No. 57 Combined Stationary Hospital.

Amara—

Headquarters, Administrative Post.
" A " Troop, 2nd Wireless Signal Squadron (less one pack station).
Advanced Depot, No. 30 Squadron, R.F.C.
122nd Infantry (less two companies).
Machine Gun Corps Advanced Depot.
British Advanced Depot.
Indian Advanced Depot.
Stokes Mortar School.
Ordnance Advanced Depot.
" I " and " K " Companies, Supply and Transport.
No. 2 Works Company (less detachments).

Amara—cont.
Detachment, Electrical and Mechancial Company, R.E.
Detachment, Base Park Company.
Detachment, Egyptian Labour Corps.
Mechanical Transport Workshops.
Headquarters Remount Depot.
Nos. 9 and 10 Field Veterinary Sections.
Nos. 17 and 100 Sanitary Sections.
No. 3 Advanced Depot of Medical Stores.
Officers' Hospital.
Isolation Hospital.
British and Indian Convalescent Depots.
Nos. 1, 2 and 32 British General Hospitals.
Nos. 12,21, 23 and 42 Indian General Hospitals.
Fifteen cars, No. 23 Motor Ambulance Convoy.

Shaikh Saad—
Headquarters, Shaikh Saad Section.
Engineer Field Park.
One company, 122nd Infantry.
Detachment, Base Park Company.
Detachment, No. 2 Labour Corps.
No. 10 Labour Corps.
Detachment, 2nd Wireless Signal Squadron.
No. 695 M.T. Company, A.S.C.
Nos. 2 and 7 Porter Corps.
Mysore Transport Company.
No. 31 British Stationary Hospital.
No. 61 Indian Stationary Hospital.
No. 20 Combined Casualty Clearing Station.
Half, Convalescent Depot.
Nine cars, No. 23 Motor Ambulance Convoy.
No. 7 Advanced Depot of Medical Stores.
No. 101 Sanitary Section.

Kut al Amara—
Detachment, No. 5 Labour Corps.
One company, 10th Labour Corps.
Two companies, 3rd Labour Corps.
Detachment, 6th Porter Corps.

Shumran—
Headquarters, Administrative Post.
No. 3 Bridging Train.

Aziziya—
Headquarters, Administrative Post.
Detachments, 2nd and 4th Labour Corps.
Two companies, 5th Porter Corps.
One wagon station, 1st Wireless Signal Squadron.
Detachment, Advanced Supply Depot.
Detachment, 19th Casualty Clearing Hospital.
Detachment, 14th Sanitary Section.

Baghdad (Advanced Base)—
Headquarters, Advanced Base.
One company, Anglo-Indian Battalion.
Army Ammunition Park.
11th Labour Corps.
Detachment, Egyptian Labour Corps.
1st, 3rd, 4th and 8th Porter Corps.
Advanced Supply Depot.
Advanced Transport Depot.

Baghdad—cont.

Detachment, No. 1 L. of C. Supply Company, A.S.C.
Expeditionary Force Canteen.
Nos. 15 and 16 Casualty Clearing Hospitals.
Officers' Convalescent Depot.
Half, Convalescent Depot.
Nos. 5 and 6 Advanced Depots of Medical Stores.
Detachment, Advanced Remount Depot.
No. 4 Mobile Veterinary Section.
No. 7 Field Veterinary Section.
No. 16 Field Veterinary Section (*en route*).
Detachments, Army Ordnance Corps and Indian Ordnance Depot.
Rest Camp.
Divisional Dumps.
Headquarters, Baghdad Works Directorate.
Nos. 2 and 3 Labour Corps (less detachments).
4th, 5th and 6th Camel Corps.
Advanced Signal Park.
No. 20 Combined Field Ambulance.
Nos. 23 and 31 British Stationary Hospitals.
Nos. 61 and 70 Indian Stationary Hospitals.
Officers' Hospital.
British Convalescent Depot.
No. 46 Sanitary Section.
No. 19 Casualty Clearing Station (Sindiya).

OTHER UNITS ON LINE OF COMMUNICATIONS.

Basra—

527th Howitzer Battery* (4 guns)—*en route* Tigris Front for 7th Division.
2/39th Garhwalis—for 12th Infantry Brigade.
84th Punjabis—for Nasiriya.
116th Mahrattas.
Aircraft Park, R.F.C.
One company, 2nd Garrison Battalion, Essex Regiment.

Qala Salih—

One section, No. 137 Indian Field Ambulance.

Amara—

Advanced Echelon, Aircraft Park.

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* Arrived Basra from England on 22nd March, 1917.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN INDEX.

A.D.M.T.	Assistant Director of Mechanical Transport.
A.H.Q.	Advanced Headquarters.
A.Q.M.G.	Assistant Quartermaster-General.
A.S.C.	Army Service Corps.
Bn.	Battalion.
C.G.S.I.	Chief of the General Staff, India.
C.I.G.S.	Chief of the Imperial General Staff.
C.M.R.	Colonial Mounted Rifles.
D.A.G.	Deputy Adjutant-General.
D.A. & Q.M.G.	Deputy Adjutant & Quartermaster-General.
D.C.I.G.S.	Deputy Chief of the Imperial General Staff.
D.I.W.T.	Director of Inland Water Transport.
D.O.S.	Director of Ordnance Services.
D. of Rlys.	Director of Railways.
D.Q.M.G.	Deputy Quartermaster-General.
G.H.Q.	General Headquarters.
H.Q.	Headquarters.
I.A.	Indian Army.
I.E.F.	Indian Expeditionary Force.
I.G.C.	Inspector-General of Communications.
I.O.	India Office.
M/G.	Machine gun.
M.G.O.	Master-General of the Ordnance.
M.T.	Mechanical Transport.
P.M.T.O.	Principal Marine Transport Officer.
R.F.C.	Royal Flying Corps.
S. & M.	Sappers and Miners.
S. of S.	Secretary of State.
T.F.	Territorial Force.
W.O.	War Office.

Note.—For divisions, brigades, regiments, battalions, etc., *see under* "Artillery"; "Cavalry"; "Infantry."

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